If James Bond rode a single…
Rick Parkington road tests Velocette's classy Venom

'I didn't pay Read, Rutter or Herron'
Mocheck's Ian Tay relives 1970s racing on a budget

Classic Bike

Britain's biggest-selling classic magazine

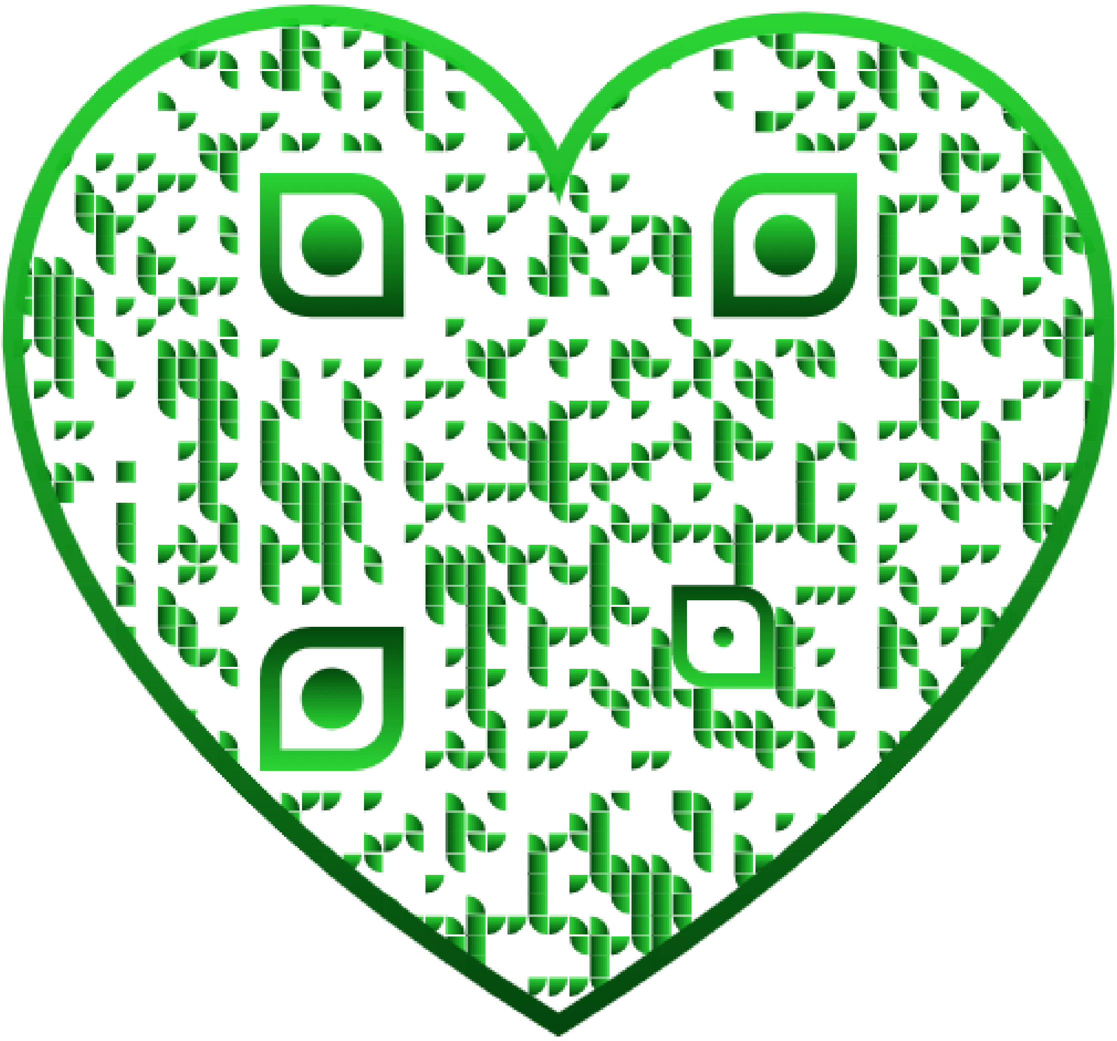
AUGUST 2025
ISSUE #547 - £5.60

ON SALE JULY 23 - AUGUST 19

KH400 (IN PURPLE) THE KAWASAKI TRIPLE OF CHOICE

100,000-*mile* EXOTICA
Unrestored Laverda Jota thrashed by one bloke for 42 years

+ The Chinese Bonneville: super-rare 750cc twin from the Far East
+ In-depth Honda CX500 buying guide + Ace back-street breakers
+ Specialist CCM workshop + Revamp Yamaha blue spot calipers



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ENQUIRIES

International Dept Director
+44 (0) 20 8963 2819
ben.walker@bonhams.com

Head of Department (UK)
+44 (0) 20 8963 2818
james.stensel@bonhams.com

Senior Specialist
+44 (0) 20 8963 2822
bill.to@bonhams.com

Specialist
+44 (0) 20 7468 8258
andrew.barrett@bonhams.com

Lancs, Yorks, Cheshire,
N. Counties & Scotland
+44 (0) 7811 899 905
mark.garside@bonhams.com

Midlands, Peak District & Wales
+44 (0) 7710 615 868
phil.ingle@bonhams.com

Lincs & East Anglia
+44 (0) 1507 481 890
David Hawtin

Leics, Northants, Herts, Beds,
Bucks & Oxon
+44 (0) 7973 661 051
martin.heckscher@bonhams.com

London, Berks, Kent, Surrey & Sussex
+44 (0) 7774 747 017
david.hancock@bonhams.com

Hampshire & Dorset
+44 (0) 1794 518 433
Mike Jackson

Devon, Cornwall &
The South West
+44 (0) 1872 250 170
jonathan.vickers@bonhams.com

Bonhams Motorcycles
Milton Keynes (Head Office)
+44 (0) 20 8963 2817
motorcycles@bonhams.com

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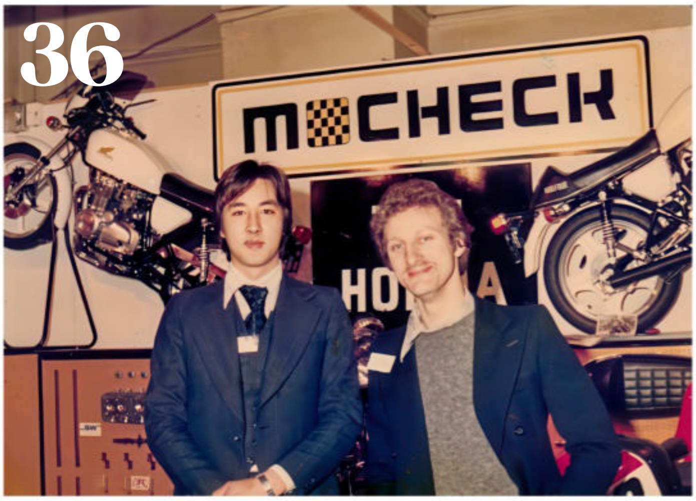
Contents



IAN TAY

BAUER

Mocheck man
▲ At lunch with Ian Tay (left), co-founder of the dealership

Asset strippers
◀ A celebration of old-school bike breakers' yards

Hello Velo
▶ Rick does his inimitable thing on a Velocette Venom

GARY MARGERUM

Weird and wonderful
▼ Obscure and rare Dong Hai 750 given resto treatment

GREG MOSS

Classic World

6 Letters
New legislation fears and more of your missives

10 We Want It
A perfectly purple Kawasaki KH400 catches our eye

12 Temptation & Quick Guide
Tasty bikes for sale plus Velocette LE guide

14 Winning Bids & Price Check
Recent auction sales plus sports moped prices

17 News
Classic TT preview, historic Vincent for sale & more

20 Out & About: Dragstalgia
Santa Pod's annual celebration of classic drag

21 Diary
All the best events for July and early August

22 Rescued, Revived & Ridden
Your bikes, in various states of useability

Features & tests

28 Cover story: 100,000-mile Jota
One man's 42-year love affair with an exotic beast

36 At Lunch With... Ian Tay
Tales of retail and racing from Mocheck co-founder

44 Rick Rides... Velocette Venom
Perceived as idiosyncratic, what's Rick's analysis?

53 Buying Guide: Honda CX500
Why the former despatchers' fave makes a fine classic

58 Scrapbook: Bike breakers
Oily pics and tales from when every town had one

64 Restoration: 1968 Dong Hai 750
Chinese Brit-twin copy restored from basket case

The workshop

72 Inside Joe Maxwell's workshop
BSA-CCM specialist's superbly equipped workplace

78 Technique: Rebuild blue spots
How to revamp the favourite retro-fit Yamaha calipers

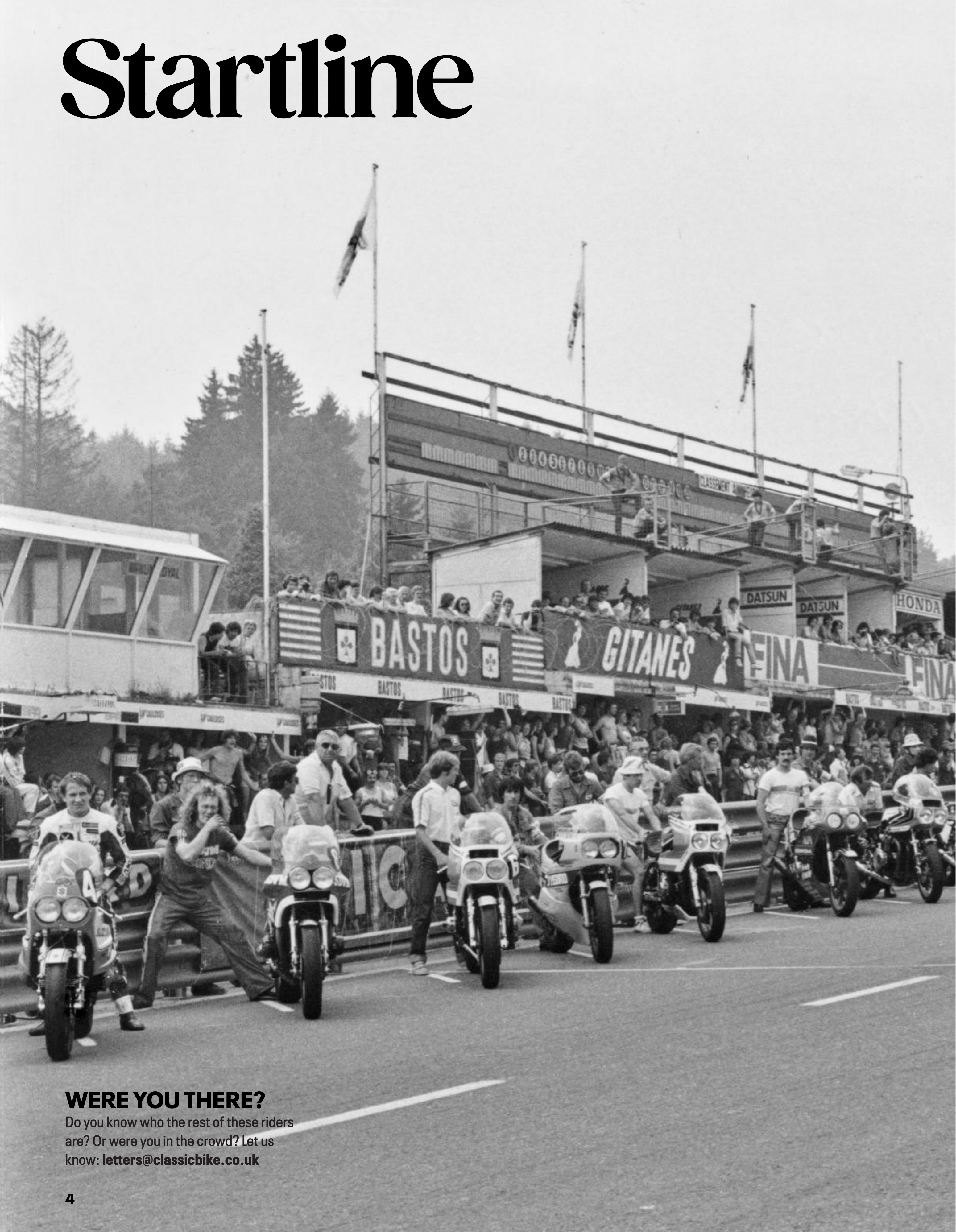
81 Project Bike: Scott Flying Squirrel
Rick continues to make amends with blown-up bike

86 Project Bike: Moto Morini Kanguro
Rupert Paul tightens up his floppy gear linkage

92 Project Bike: BSA Bantam
Hugo gets it as good as he can - and offers it for sale

94 British Bike Basics: Levers & throttles
Lowdown on the various actuating devices on old Brits

Startline


BASTOS
GITANES
FINA
DATSUN
HONDA

WERE YOU THERE?

Do you know who the rest of these riders are? Or were you in the crowd? Let us know: **letters@classicbike.co.uk**

August 1981, 24 Heures de Liège Moto, Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium

It's the moment on Saturday afternoon, when the flag drops at the start of the 24 Heures de Liège and the riders sprint across the track to their machines. Closest to the camera is Richard Hubin, whose bike (#4) is being supported by co-rider Herve Moineau. Unfortunately, someone had forgotten to turn the factory Suzuki's ignition on, so Richard's speedy sprint was to no avail as they were left on the line until one of them realised what was wrong.

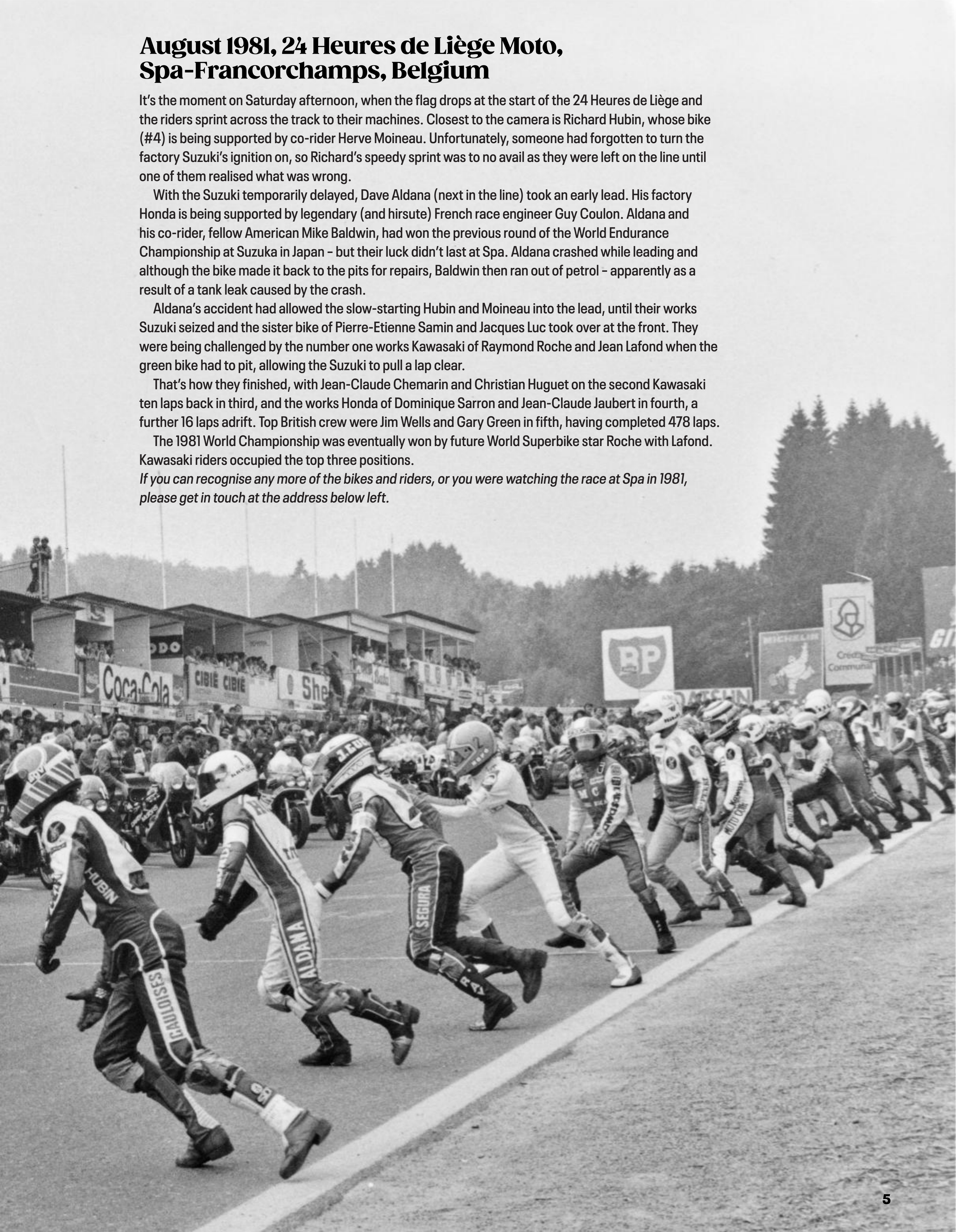
With the Suzuki temporarily delayed, Dave Aldana (next in the line) took an early lead. His factory Honda is being supported by legendary (and hirsute) French race engineer Guy Coulon. Aldana and his co-rider, fellow American Mike Baldwin, had won the previous round of the World Endurance Championship at Suzuka in Japan – but their luck didn't last at Spa. Aldana crashed while leading and although the bike made it back to the pits for repairs, Baldwin then ran out of petrol – apparently as a result of a tank leak caused by the crash.

Aldana's accident had allowed the slow-starting Hubin and Moineau into the lead, until their works Suzuki seized and the sister bike of Pierre-Etienne Samin and Jacques Luc took over at the front. They were being challenged by the number one works Kawasaki of Raymond Roche and Jean Lafond when the green bike had to pit, allowing the Suzuki to pull a lap clear.

That's how they finished, with Jean-Claude Chemarin and Christian Huguet on the second Kawasaki ten laps back in third, and the works Honda of Dominique Sarron and Jean-Claude Jaubert in fourth, a further 16 laps adrift. Top British crew were Jim Wells and Gary Green in fifth, having completed 478 laps.

The 1981 World Championship was eventually won by future World Superbike star Roche with Lafond. Kawasaki riders occupied the top three positions.

If you can recognise any more of the bikes and riders, or you were watching the race at Spa in 1981, please get in touch at the address below left.



JAN HEESE

Letters

letters@classicbike.co.uk facebook.com/classicbikemagazine classicbike.co.uk

Classic Bike, Media House, Peterborough Business Park, Lynch Wood, Peterborough, Cambs, PE2 6EA

Hello

When I was a youth, my home-tuned Honda MT-5 was fond of jettisoning its piston rings via the comically oversize exhaust port. When this happened – or one of my friends' equally unreliable machines ploughed a deep score in its barrel, or some handlebars were turned boomerang shape in another comedy spill – we'd potter around the local bike shops to source the necessary parts to correct our foolishness.

There was one in our village and half a dozen in the nearest town, most of which had a satisfyingly grubby air. They also had a brilliant mix of shiny and not-so shiny parts. The occasional new bike would share the shop floor with lots of decidedly well-used machinery; new helmets and sparkly bolt-ons jostled for shelf space with assorted used parts. But the best bit was out the back – and often heaped either side of the door, and stuffed down the alley at the side.

There would be partially stripped bikes, filthy engines with tissue stuffed in the various holes and fuel tanks with dents. Thoroughly scraped silencers were propped against the wall. Shocks would be piled upon each other like some sort of modern art. And, of course, we'd be scowled at by a chap in a dirty brown smock who gave the impression that we were using the last of what little patience he'd retained (which, of course, we probably were). And we loved the places.

Fabulous oil-scented memories of these back-street bike breakers came flooding back at the discovery of a folder shoved between some dusty cabinets in the *Classic Bike* archive (it's an easy place to lose things). Hugo Wilson has assembled a selection of some of the fabulous findings on page 58 in celebration of old-school bike breakers. If you recognise any of the people and places – or have tales to tell of visiting your own neighbourhood parts purveyor – we'd love to hear from you. The contact details are above.

I've enjoyed some other fond memories this month, too. I was lucky enough to work on *Classic Bike* for a year or so back in 2018, and have now managed to prop my dribbling Yamaha TDR250 next to the office door (I really must sort that gearchange shaft seal) and shuffle my way back in again. And it genuinely feels great to back.

The magazine is in rude health thanks to Hugo, Rick, John, Mark, Austin and our extended family of contributors – but above all thanks to you, the lovely *Classic Bike* readers. This is your magazine, and it's a privilege to make it.

Enjoy the issue.

Mike Armitage, Editor

Contributors in this issue

100,000 NOT OUT

Gez Kane

Along with his usual market wisdom, Gez brings the story of a 100,000-mile Laverda and delivers deep insight for would-be CX500 owners.

Pages 28-34/53-56

Bantam flies the coup

Hugo Wilson

He's only just cleared his desk yet ex-editor Hugo is already back with great stories. His bike breaker feature and Bantam antics are must-read.

Pages58-59/92-93

Sorry, IT'S A WHAT...?

Mick Duckworth

One of the greats of classic bike journilsm, Mick's found a big twin that's familiar and yet highly unusual. You've heard of a Dong Hai, right?

Pages 64-69

Really very good

I just finished reading the excellent June issue and have to compliment you on another fabulous production. I've been a subscriber for a few years now and really look forward to the mag dropping through my letterbox, the recent changes to the format improving an already excellent magazine.

I usually skim-read the magazine upon first opening the envelope – and was delighted to see on page 81 the write-up on the Suzuki T500/GT500, having recently acquired a 1976 GT version.

And you know what the best part of it all was? Finding out that I paid the bottom end of 'Good' for what, in my eyes, is a Very Good example.

Andy Bassindale

Wellness issues

Great article on the late Malcolm Smith (News, January issue.) He was one of my heroes when I was growing up. Fabulous story about the construction of those four Yamaha 500GP replicas in the March issue, too. You guys enhance my life – keep up the great work.

Alex McLean

You wear it well

Your recent article on the great Joey Dunlop prompted me to retrieve the T-shirt below from my cupboard – TT '95 and Joey on the mighty RVF.

I had intended to get it framed like a football shirt, but now wear it more often – not bad for a 30-year-old item.

Richard W Howland, Northumberland

ISLE OF MAN
3
TT
95
Festival
May 29 – June 9

RICHARD W HOWLAND

Richard has got plenty of wear out of his T-shirt

BONHAMS

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Storm brews over barn finds

Classic bike lovers need to be vigilant about possible new legislation regarding barn finds, restorations and specials...

The news in July's *Classic Bike* that we may have to fight to restore barn finds is the thin end of a very sharp wedge hurtling towards the classic world – with little attention being paid to the matter by any of us busy at the lathe. This is not a mad conspiracy theory, but based on a UK Government consultation paper that is already going through parliament.

The Call For Evidence by The Department for Transport on the Registration of Rebuilt, Kit Built, Kit Converted, Radically Altered, Reconstructed, Classics and Vehicles Converted to Electric was opened on May 9, 2024 and closed on July 4, 2024 (read the report at tinyurl.com/yd9djmzr). It wasn't widely known about and had less than 1500 responses. The 'opinion and expertise' of just 1500 people may shape the very core of the classic vehicle world for years to come.

In effect it could demand that only original parts can be used in a 'classic' vehicle and that even rewound or pattern parts could result in the classification of a vehicle as 'historic' being rescinded. It also undermines many of the Bike Shed-type customising projects as no longer being considered classics due to heavy modification. Q-plates anyone?

Hopefully this will be fought off by classic fans and associated trades and services – but if we are unaware of these changes then it will likely come to pass without us being consulted further.

With ever-tightening regulations, we might also get to a point where any restoration work can only be undertaken by qualified engineers to comply with our insurance cover. I don't think we want this, either.

Please keep up the excellent work and watch out for looming changes. We know that our vehicles do not fit the autonomous vehicle vision – perhaps this is a way of getting us off the roads of the future?

Martin Wilkie, Reigate

Stick to the basics

I was having a clear-out the other day and came across some patches that were a free gift from one of your sister magazines some time ago. They made me think of all the great freebies I've received over the years, including lots of great stickers. Freebies aside, can I just say how impressed I am with your new and continuing change of format; I still have the very first edition and most of the rest stacked safely away. You really are moving in the right direction, covering all aspects and ages of the bikes we love – not just the high value ones out of most people's league. Thanks again and when can we expect a few stickers please?

Martin Dudley

Can't beat a good sticker. Maybe if enough people ask we can start looking into it... Mike Armitage

Great Greenland

What an iconic picture of George Greenland at the Natterjack (Obituary, July 2025 issue). It really captured the essence of a great enthusiast. I first met George in about 1970 when I was 14, observing in a Bridport Trial. I was looking after the middle of three subsections up through a stream bed; the main obstacle in mine was a large rock, which kept getting moved, so I had to keep putting

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+ Specialist CCM workshop + Revamp Yamaha blue spot calipers

COVER IMAGES: GREG MOSS, GARY MARGERUM

Issue #547 of *Classic Bike* was brought to you...

...to the sound of
Tomorrow Never Knows
by The Beatles

...despite this distraction
This year's running of
Dragstalgia at Santa Pod

.. with this refreshment
Several pints of Rutland Beast
at Hugo & Austin's leaving do

...and thanks to
Hugo & Austin – good luck
in the future, old friends

This issue was made by...

Editor Mike Armitage,
mike.armitage@bauermedia.co.uk
Art Director Austin Smith
Production Editor Mark Holmes,
mark.holmes@classicbike.co.uk
Technical Editor Rick Parkington,
workshop@classicbike.co.uk
Editorial Assistant Alison Silcox,
alison.silcox@classicbike.co.uk
Group Art Director, Motorcycling
Steve Herbert-Mattick,
steve.herbert-mattick@bauermedia.co.uk

Advertising

Group Commercial Director
Gareth Ashman, 01733 468118
Commercial Manager
Sarah Nicholas, 01733 366311
Account Manager
Rebecca Jackson, 01733 395071
rebecca.jackson@bauermedia.co.uk
Senior Sales Executive
Annie Mulcrone, 01733 979445
annie.mulcrone@bauermedia.co.uk
Telesales
Imogen Jackaman, 01733 459278
imogen.jackaman@bauermedia.co.uk

BAUER MEDIA GROUP

This shot of George Greenland epitomises the spirit of the man who passed away at 92 – at a trial in Belgium

it back in place. George was riding a very neat 500 Triumph Wasp – and the rock was in a different position when he rode to when he had walked the section! So much so that, on his way back down, he stopped to watch what was happening to it as several further riders tackled the section. Unfortunately, I was somewhat intimidated by his scrutiny and didn't feel able to adjust the rock, which of course made him all the more annoyed about it – but he did eventually move on without further comment.
Geoff Williams

T-shirts to be proud of

Further to my note about the lovely gloves *Classic Bike* once offered its readers (Letters, April issue), below is evidence that your products stand the test of time! I'm always happy to be seen in one of these T-shirts with your logo on the back. Can we have some more such offers? Keep up the good work.
Peter Baillee

We may have some of those left in Classic Bike*'s secret cupboard. If it's empty, we'll look into having some more made...* ***Mike Armitage***

CREDIT 3 PHOTO CREDIT

Peter Baillie's making a call for more *CB* clobber

Crazy about carbs

I've just finished reading the June edition of *Classic Bike*, which was great reading as usual. I was particularly pleased to see the article by Rick on Amal's pre-Monobloc carburettor. I absolutely love these carbs, and have been working on them since the early '60s. Three of my four BSAs have them fitted as standard – and I would not replace them with later carbs. In fact, when I look at a pre-1955 British bike, my eyes first focus on the carb. The amount of these machines that have later replacement carbs – Monobloc and Concentric, for example – is very high, but to me just spoil the bike.

I have a couple of observations after having read the article, however. Firstly, the exploded photo showing the listed components named the pilot air screw as being the spigot clip bolt, whereas the pilot screw is just to the left of this item.

Lastly, Rick says that the standard unstamped needle jet is size 0.107. I think Rick will find that the standard size is 0.106. Namely because an exceptionally large amount of bikes with the pre-Monobloc carb use the 0.106 needle jet; also, I have a quantity of spare needle jets stamped 107, but none stamped 106.
Graham Chester

You're right, Graham – the standard needle jet is 106. Not quite sure how

‘Any later replacement carbs on pre-’55 British bikes just spoil the bike’

I got wrong – let’s blame the hot weasther. The mis-labelling was a slip-up. Thanks for the correction. ***Rick Parkington***

Father knows best

Having given my father permission to read the (excellent) July issue, being a Scott man he immediately gravitated to Rick’s article detailing the work on Judy’s Flying Squirrel. Dad wanted to let Rick know that the gudgeon pins (picture 2) are/should be parallel and not tapered – the end pad that is larger in diameter than the pin determines which way the pin can be removed. He called it a ‘major error’, though I would say that’s over-egging it a little…
Michael Bushell

I wondered if anyone would pick up on it… Yes, your father is correct. It’s a bit like writing captions for Rupert Bear cartoons, with a lot ot pack in – and I thought the main point was they only go one way and ‘tapered’ sums it up in one word. ***Rick Parkington***

How reassuring

I enjoyed your article about heading to the North West 200 on your cheap Honda VFR750 (July issue). Even though the V4 might not be in the finest fettle, it was reassuring proof of how useable a ‘modern classic’ truly is. Cheap too. For just £750, that seems like a bargain. Seeing the bike in the ferry queue among all the modern bikes highlighted just how affordable a genuinely usable (and desirable) 1990s bike can be. And I bet none of its modern-day counterparts in that photo are as engaging to ride or sound as good.

You say it deserves a restoration, but I wouldn’t bother. A classic VFR’s brilliance is what it delivers for such little outlay.
Grant Jenkinson

Send your letters to…

Share your opinions, stories, questions and memories by sending them to **letters@ classicbike.co.uk**

ClassicBike MAGAZINE NEEDS YOU…

Have you just bought a new project? Or have you finished a project, taken part in an event or just been for a ride? Do you have pictures of you or your friends from your biking past? Or can you identify the riders or a face in the crowd from the Startline image on page four? Please write and tell us

Startline
How many riders from the 1981 startline can you identify?

Letters
Want to start a conversation about bike values or commend good service?

Your classics
Just acquired a new project, completed a restoration or been for a great ride?

The Way We Were
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CLASSIC WORLD

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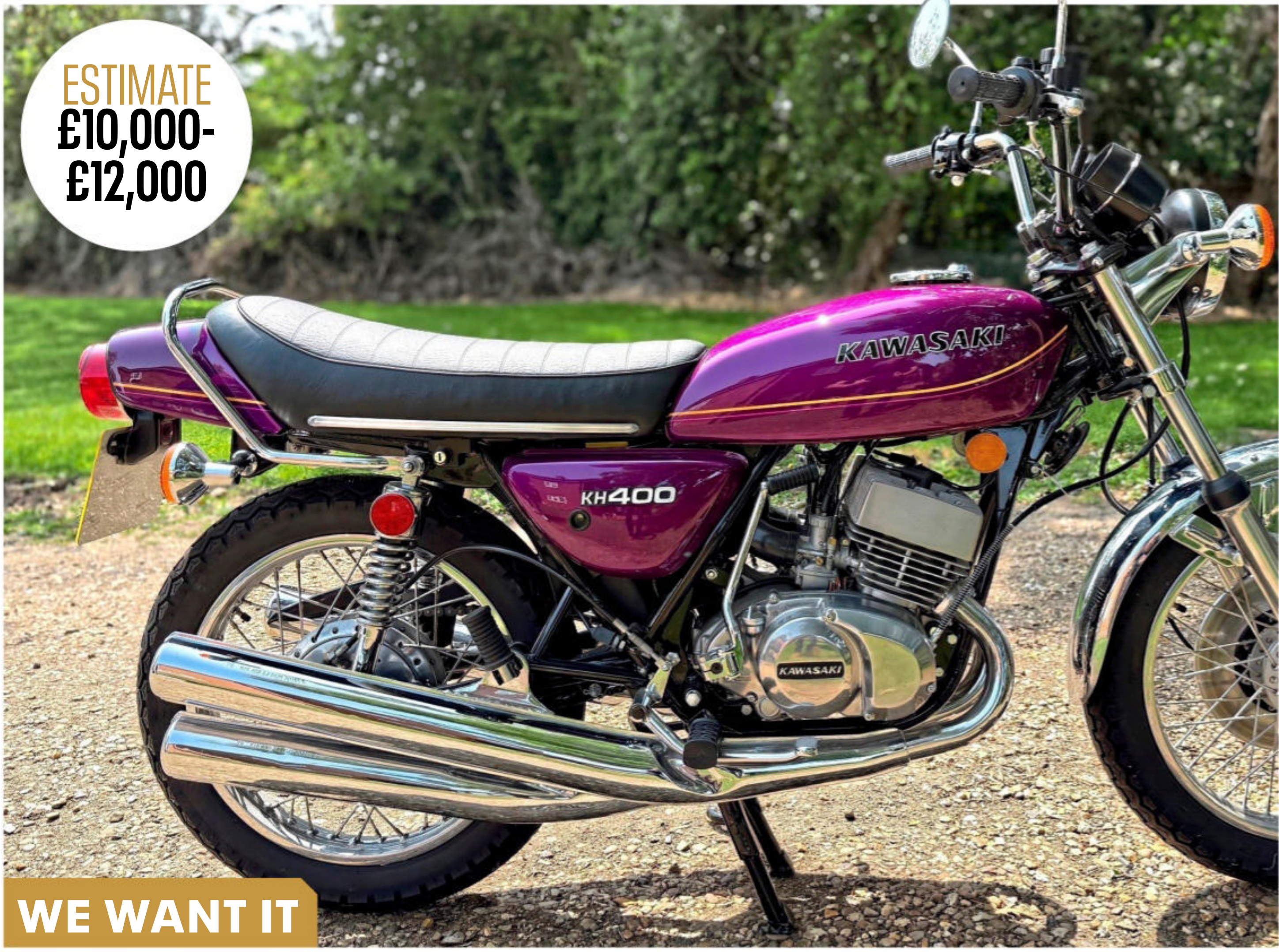


ESTIMATE £10,000-£12,000

WE WANT IT

Right size, right colour

Kawasaki's larger two-stroke triples have a mighty reputation and generate much lust, but for summer back-lane frolics we'd want to be perched on this **1977 KH400**

Much is made of Kawasaki's three-pot stroker options of the earlier 1970s; the H1 500 and the H2 750. Quite correctly too – as raw two-stroke experiences they are both standout items. Yet the jewel in Big K's triple crown, the more refined, yet equally rewarding to ride KH400 is the tool to have.

With 'only' a real-world rear wheel 35bhp you might imagine it's not a patch on the fiery H1 with its claimed 60bhp. Mere numbers, however, never paint a complete picture.

The 1977 KH400 A4 shared the same running gear as the 250. That chassis was without doubt the best of any of the triples; stable, compliant, agile enough, and possessed of passable brakes for the time, it a was a perfect match for the well-mannered 400.4cc five-speed triple.

This is not a question of less is more, but proof that just enough can be all you need. The stock pipes, as pleasingly still worn by this example, provide the best soundtrack for these magical engines. Aftermarket expansion chambers may lend a crackling aggression to the slugs of gas exiting the exhaust ports, but nothing compares to the muted pops and grinding wail of the OE system.

This particular KH is as stock as an OXO cube. The higher handlebar betrays it as an imported machine, and it is described as a restored example. Nothing wrong with either bit of information.

Iconic Auctioneers have slapped a £10,000-12,000 estimate on this bike for their 20 July Shuttleworth Sale. Two years ago that might have been in the ballpark, but in the current market it's perhaps unlikely this bike will make

13
Quick Guide
Velocette LE insight

15
Price Check
Latest values in sporty 'peds

20
Out & About
All the wonder of Dragstalgia

The look, the noise, the colour. Always hard to resist

more than eight thousand pounds in the prevailing climate.

At that money – and assuming there's not an unrealistic reserve lurking underneath – it's one of the most useable everyday Kawasaki triples you could own – and good value to boot. Powerful enough to entertain, prettier in Candy Royal Purple than any green meanie ever was, this mighty fine 400 is simply begging to find its way to a good home.

In its oh-so-fine livery with gold pinstriping, engine detailing of the highest order, and no needless deviations from factory specification, the auction house claim that it's 'possibly the best machine currently for sale in the UK' is by no means too outlandish.

Strokers of the day rarely fail to provide fun and games out of all proportion to their cubic capacity. Here's a prime example.

iconicauctioneers.com

'If I had £10,000...'

Andy Tiernan, longtime vendor of all manner of classics from his premises in Suffolk (since 1972), tells what he'd do if he had our imaginary wedge to spend...

BSA M20

£6000
TAS 954

"I'd have a BSA M20," he says without the slightest hesitation. "They're very good things the WD (War Department) models in khaki. BSA made 126,000 of them from 1939 onwards and there are quite a few still around. The bottom end is strong and it's what the Gold Star was based on - a very sound design." If a motorcycle can survive abuse by the military in such numbers it must be, to use the term advisedly, absolutely bombproof. "I've had lots of them over the years," he says. "You can get a good one for around six grand, while a very good one is nearer eight. So a six grand example would do me."

Colchester lathe

"Next on my list would be a Colchester Chipmaster lathe," says Andy. "Any of the old names like Boxford or Colchester made fantastic products. A lathe does take up quite a bit of space but more than makes up for that with what you do with it. It's almost like the iPhone of the 20th Century. If you're an expert, you can make it do almost anything, and if you're not it will still work perfectly performing the most basic functions. We've got one in the workshop but I'd like one for myself too." A classic Chipmaster metal turning machine tool in decent condition will these days cost around three thousand pounds.

Automotech bike ramp

"I'd love a hydraulic bike ramp from Automotech Services Limited in Rugeley, Staffs. I might have to settle on a cheaper M20 to afford a good one, but if you're serious about working on motorcycles you simply must have a bike ramp," says Andy. "The best ones will go as high as you like so you can work on any part of a bike at the ideal level. Work gets done faster, you're way more comfortable, it's the best tool you'll ever buy. In fact it should almost be my number one choice, then I could get a slightly rougher M20 and do any of the work it needs in total comfort." Prices for Automotech hydraulic bike ramps start at around £1250.

PHOTOGRAPHY: BAUER ARCHIVE, AUTOMOTECH

12 bikes you can buy

Gez Kane is always on the lookout for the tastiest bikes on sale. Here's what he's spotted for sale this month – there must be something to tempt you...

£2250

1966 BSA Bantam D7

Not totally original, but a tidy-looking 175cc Bantam fully rebuilt around five years ago. Used regularly since and described as a good starter, it's fitted with electronic ignition and is offered in ready to ride condition.
Private sale 07496 935056

£3999

1952 Triumph TRW

Triumph's side-valve 500 twin rarely appears for sale. This ex-Pakistani military example is an older restoration that looks in good condition, with stainless steel rims. Not used for a few years, but said to be ready to go.
Private sale 07887 622966

£9000

1998 Ducati 916 BP

Owned since 2006 and has enjoyed regular servicing in that time, including cambelt replacement. Fitted with Öhlins shock and Termignoni exhaust (the original comes with the bike) and has recently had a new clutch.
Private sale 07981 945463

£7000

1979 Ducati GTS

Tasteful café racer offering affordable entry into bevel Ducati ownership. Present owner for 20 years, well looked after and appears well put together, too. Lovely alloy tank, race-style seat and two-into-one exhaust.
Private sale 07746 699151

£3500

1985 Yamaha V-Max

Full power Canadian-market bike with just 23,000 miles on the clock. Recent oil and filter change, Supertrapp exhaust, tax and MoT - and becomes tax and MoT exempt later this year. P/X possible too.
Private sale 07876 704268

£11,995

1977 Laverda Jota

A very tidy, matching and correct numbers bike that comes with an extensive history file including a letter of authenticity from Slater Brothers. Lots of work carried out over the last few years, with receipts to prove.
Dealer sale anthonygodin.co.uk

£9950

2007 Bimota DB6 Delirio

Bimota's sublime frame and top-notch cycle parts wrapped round Ducati's 95bhp air-cooled four-valve 1078cc V-twin engine is a recipe for fast and furious fun in an ultra-lightweight package.
Dealer sale classicsuperbikes.co.uk

£25,000

1995 Magni Australia

Named in honour of the successful twins class racers that dominated in Australia, New Zealand and the USA, this super-rare fuel-injected Guzzi Daytona-engined machine has had three owners and is ready to ride.
Dealer sale classicsuperbikes.co.uk

£2500

1971 Yamaha AT1

A delightful example of the US-market version of the AT1. Looks extremely clean and original and the electric start works perfectly. Needs registering (NOVA docs supplied), a battery and the tank cleaning internally.
Dealer sale classicbikeimports.co.uk

£5000

1977 Rickman Kawasaki

A rare machine that needs some work to finish. Rebuilt Rickman rolling chassis has new wheel bearings, brake pistons and seals. The 1977 Z1000 engine has been refreshed, with a new camchain and piston rings.

Private sale 07976 622946

£6995

1984 Honda XLV750R D

This rare and unusual shaft-drive adventure bike is the forerunner of the Africa Twin. Never an official UK model, this one was imported in 1995. In good unrestored condition and apparently runs very well.

Dealer sale anthonygodin.co.uk

£9995

1975 Kawasaki H1F

Restored in the last five years and with a full engine rebuild by well-respected specialists the Triples Workshop, this looks a very useable example of Kawasaki's middleweight triple. A test ride is available, too.

Dealer sale classicbikes.co.uk

Quick guide

Velocette LE

LE Velo Owners Club historian **Dennis Frost** has nurtured a passion for the quirky lightweight flat-twins for over 50 years. Here's his advice about them

Why it's desirable

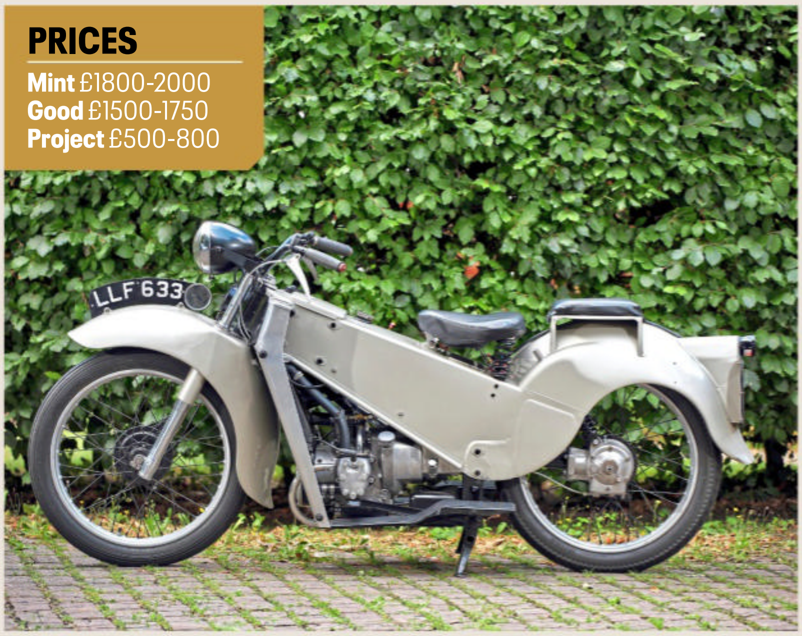
LEs are just different. They don't appeal to everyone, but they have a lot going for them. An LE was my first bike in 1969 and I still own it – plus about 30 others. If you're interested in engineering, they're fascinating – absorbing to work on and great fun to ride, once you get in the right mindset. I commuted into London for years on one. I've lent bikes out to people who are thinking of buying one – and most have bought their own.

What to look for

If you're new to LEs, it's probably better to go for as late a model as you can find. From 1965-on, LEs have 12-volt Lucas electrics – more practical than the earlier, six-volt Miller system. From 1958, there's a foot-change four-speed gearbox too. The frame number on an LE is on a metal plate riveted to the underside of the toolbox lid. Make sure that's present if a bike doesn't have a V5C, or you might struggle to get it registered.

PRICES

Mint £1800-2000
Good £1500-1750
Project £500-800



TIM KEETON/IMPACT IMAGES

How much to pay

The LE is a very affordable in the great scheme of things, although in reality it's better to pay a little more for a good machine that's well sorted. In the region of £1500-1750 will secure you a good ready-to-ride bike. There are plenty around, so don't rush into a buying decision. Bikes at the cheaper end of the market will almost always need work. That's fine if you don't mind doing it, but it's easy to spend more on sorting a bike out than it would have cost to buy a good one in the first place.

Join the club

The club is the only game in town when it comes to parts. We stepped in to buy up all remaining parts inventories back in the mid-'70s – and the remaining factory parts stock in the early '90s. We can supply just about everything to keep your LE on the road and have commissioned the remanufacture of many new parts. We also have a network of members who can handle specialist tasks – from reconditioning oil pumps to re-magnetising Miller generators.

le-velo-club.com

12 bikes that sold

There really is something for everyone in the classic bike market at the moment, even for seasoned market watcher **Gez Kane**, as you'll discover below.

£4550

1956 BSA Road Rocket

Great all-round condition and ready to ride. Fitted with an electric start conversion, new advance/retard unit, clutch (hub, springs and pressure plate) and recently serviced. A very practical Brit classic that looks a great buy.

eBay.co.uk

£4830

1970 Honda SL350 K0

This lovely US import has benefitted from a full engine rebuild by noted CB350 race tuner Ken Garfield. Since that was completed, it has covered a mere 600 miles. It's in superb cosmetic order, too.

bonhams.com

£300

circa 1970 MZ150

A wonderful period piece from MZ's classic era. Sold from a deceased estate and obviously needing some work. Nonetheless, it could make a rewarding project. It'd be a real shame to over-restore it, though.

charterhouse-bikes.com

£1220

1989 Kawasaki ZXR750 H1

Needs tidying up and has fuelling issues, but runs. Doesn't look a bad price for a first-year example of one of the more desirable sports 750s of the late 80s. Looks pretty original apart from the aftermarket exhaust, too.

eBay.co.uk

£3910

1989 Kawasaki KR-1

The 250 KR-1 initially had piston problems (often caused by wonky barrels). This bike's engine was rebuilt by Kawasaki at seven years old, possibly for that reason. Stored since 2013 and needs recommissioning.

bonhams.com

£1400

circa 1975 Honda TL125K2

Wish I'd seen this - I could save a fortune restoring mine. Lovely original condition with all hard-to-find parts present and correct. It hasn't run for a number of years - but I'd bet it won't take much to reawaken.

charterhouse-bikes.com

£2000

1975 Suzuki GT185

Japanese lightweights are hot property now - and despite this only being in fair condition with some corrosion evident and a leak from one of the carb float bowls, this US-market model has made a decent price.

eBay.co.uk

£2760

1973 BMW R75/5

Unused for the last six years, but looking tidy and well cared for, this needs checking over before use. The extensive documentation of its repair and maintenance provided hints that shouldn't prove too onerous.

bonhams.com

£1200

1977 Honda CD175

A gorgeous restoration of Honda's working class hero of the '70s. Most of these ride-to-work lightweights have been flogged into the ground, so this outstanding resto must have been a labour of love.

charterhouse-bikes.com

Price check

Sports mopeds

They were the first taste of freedom for a generation. What price reliving your glory days on a 50mph 50?

Bike	Description	Winning bid	Auctioneer
1974 Yamaha FS1-E	Superb resto, Popsicle Purple, unused since 2019	£10,120	Iconic
1975 Yamaha FS1-E	Fully restored, some aftermarket parts	£5250	eBay
1973 Yamaha FS1-E	First year model in immaculate, restored condition	£5200	HJ Pugh
1976 Yamaha FS1-E	Restored, excellent condition and running well	£4900	eBay
1977 Yamaha FS1-E	Earlier restoration, not ridden since 2013, but runs well	£4700	eBay
1974 Yamaha FS1-E	Restored in 2019, fine running and riding condition	£4500	HJ Pugh
circa 1977 Suzuki AP50	Unrestored, fair condition, starts and runs well	£3400	eBay
1977 Puch M50	Restored Grand Prix, engine rebuilt, UK registered	£2990	Iconic
1977 Yamaha RD50	Restricted model, French import, good condition	£2875	Iconic
1988 Yamaha FS1	Non-pedal model, fully restored, excellent runner	£2600	HJ Pugh
1977 Suzuki AP50	For restoration and hasn't been run for a year	£2550	eBay
1977 Yamaha FS1-E	Last of pedal models, barn find, project condition	£2250	eBay
1981 Yamaha FS1-E	Restricted model, no pedals, restoration project	£2100	eBay
1975 Honda SS50	Scruffy, but largely complete and running	£1850	eBay
1974 Fantic Caballero	Running and riding TX94, part-restored	£1801	eBay
1977 Honda SS50	Irish registered, running, but needs restoration	£1672	eBay
circa 1977 Suzuki AP50	Non-running French import, needs plenty of work	£1600	eBay
1979 Yamaha FS1-E	Restricted, non-pedal model for restoration	£1200	eBay
1976 Honda SS50	Mostly complete, for restoration, non-runner	£1131	eBay
1976 Gilera 50 Enduro	French import, earlier resto not run since	£1000	eBay

'How much?' Gez Kane on classic values

The days of the 10 grand Fizzy might not be quite over as the beautifully restored machine sold recently by Iconic Auctioneers proves – but I feel it will become the exception rather than the rule. Generally, £5k-6k looks enough to buy a very tidy original or well restored one.

Possibly held back by the more precarious parts supply, the exotic Italian machines like Garelli's Tiger Cross and Fantic's Caballero seem to have dropped back in value, too – when they do appear on the market at all.

And, while Honda SS50s and Suzuki AP50s don't come up for sale with anything like the frequency of FS1-Es, when they do their prices don't seem to be much less than for a Fizzy in comparable condition.

The *Classic Bike* auction diary

July 30-August 1
Mathewsons online sale
mathewsons.co.uk

August 6
Brightwells online classic car and motorcycle sale
brightwells.com

August 14-16
Mecum Monterey Sale, Del Monte Golf Course, Monterey, California, USA
mecum.com

August 16
Cheffins Harrogate Vintage sale, The Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate, North Yorkshire
cheffins.co.uk

August 30/31
Anglia Car Auctions Sale, The Cattlemarket, Beveridge Way, King's Lynn, Norfolk
angliacarauctions.co.uk

September 5
Manor Park Classics Motorcycle Sale, Ikon House, Runcorn, Cheshire
manorparkclassics.com

£1600

1998 Ducati 750SS

This belt-drive 750 hasn't been used since the seller bought it last year, but it's in good cosmetic order and, even with the price of a full service added, looks like fair value. Could make a fairly practical everyday classic.
eBay.co.uk

£4600

1973 Norton 750 Commando

Looks like a good time to buy a Commando. This very presentable Interstate is an earlier restoration. The bike has been unused for around six years and was sold as a non-runner, though the engine turns over easily.
bonhams.com

£3700

1975 Suzuki GT250

Further proof that Suzuki lightweights fetch solid money. This GT has been beautifully restored by the previous owner, is running well and has been in recent use, and was ridden in to the auction from Yeovil.
charterhouse-bikes.com

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DIY

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* Every conceivable part is included with a new clutch shock absorber unit. You will be able to use the original clutch plates.

We are confident the kit will transform the riding experience with a one-touch starting and improved transmission.

The high-quality Denso® starter motor is negative polarity so a regulator/rectifier will be needed for +positive earth situations.

TRIUMPH | Starter Kit

***KITS INCLUDE:**

- **Primary Drive Cover**
- **Starter Motor Assembly**
- **Battery Cables** ***(-Negative and +Positive)***
- **Belt Drive Kit including Clutch Basket to suit standard Triumph Clutch Plates**
- ***Fitting Kit including:*** **Oil Seal, Breather Mod and Cush Drive Mod.**

*(*Contents of the kits vary according to the model of the motorcycle. Please note the batteries are not included).*

Libertalia

Oilskin Tool Roll & Tools

£179.50

Includes all the tools you need to make roadside repairs.

Tool Set: Rear wheel spanner, Suspension spanner, Tappet spanner, Spark plug wrench, Screwdriver with two Phillips heads and two flat heads, 5 Hex keys, Tyre pressure gauge & 4 spanners ⅜, 7/16, ½, 9/16

T140 CON ROD BOLTS

£79.50 Set of 4

Also suitable for: Triumph T100, Daytona 500cc unit twin-cylinder, Triumph TR25W Trophy 250cc & BSA B25 Starfire 250cc single-cylinder models too.

Machined from nickel chromium molybdenum hardened and tempered as EN24T alloy steel. EN24T steel readily combines a good high tensile steel strength of 850/1000 N/mm^2 with shock resistance, ductility and wear resistance. The threads are cut to a very fine tolerance to ensure a perfect fit with the nuts supplied.

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**Postage & prices are subject to change. E&OE.*

PACEMAKER

Mike Browne and the Key Racing 916 are the combination to beat at this year's Classic TT

Another win for 916?

The highlight of August's Classic TT is almost certain to be the F1 race. And this Ducati 916, run by Key Racing, will be very hard to beat...

This year's Classic TT F1 race looks set to be a cracker, with hordes of Kawasaki ZXR750s lining up against the pre-race favourite: Key Racing's all-conquering Ducati 916. Key Racing announced it will run two 916s – one for last year's winner, Mike Browne, and another for the bloke he beat into second, Rob Hodson.

And they'll be faster than ever. "Last year's winning bike was fine," says team boss Tim Key, "but we lacked a little speed. This year it'll be quicker due to the engine work we've done.

"We use the biggest valves we can get into a 996 engine [*the latest version of the 916 motor allowed by the rules*] and factory throttle bodies. But just twisting the cam timing back and forward on the dyno produces quite significant results."

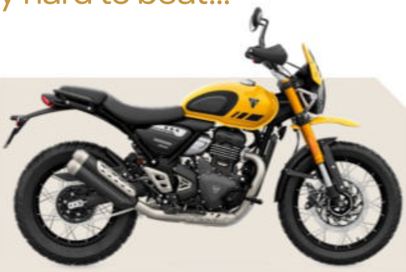
Because the factory motors have a run-time of 500km before needing rebuilding, the dyno testing is expensive. "You have to be prepared to sacrifice an engine to get the settings," says Tim. "And a rebuild costs £5k. That's what you have to do to win."

There are four other Classic TT races in the revamped event. Running in tandem are four Manx GP races for modern bikes, so the whole event is a 12-day racing festival.

Qualifying starts on August 17, with racing from August 23-29.

More info: iomttraces.com/classic

Rob Hodson will be on Key Racing's second 916



Triumph announce new Scrambler 400XC

This new dirt-styled version of Triumph's popular Speed 400 single-cylinder has been unveiled. It comes with spoked wheels, a flyscreen, sump guard and engine bars. The Scrambler 400XC is basically a dirty version of the current Scrambler 400X, which was really just a Speed 400 with handguards. The XC looks far more authentic. The extra bits cost, though: the XC will be £6545 when it appears in September – £600 more than the X.

What's new

Joey tribute lid

If you're heading to the Classic TT to join the celebrations commemorating 25 years since Joey Dunlop's incredible F1 win, here's the hat to wear. Arai are making 600 of the Joey replicas – based on an RX-7X Evo – and each one comes with a certificate signed by Joey's widow Linda. It costs £869.99 (you read that right) from thevisorshop.com.

Arai
SHOP.COM
Shell Oils

ARAI

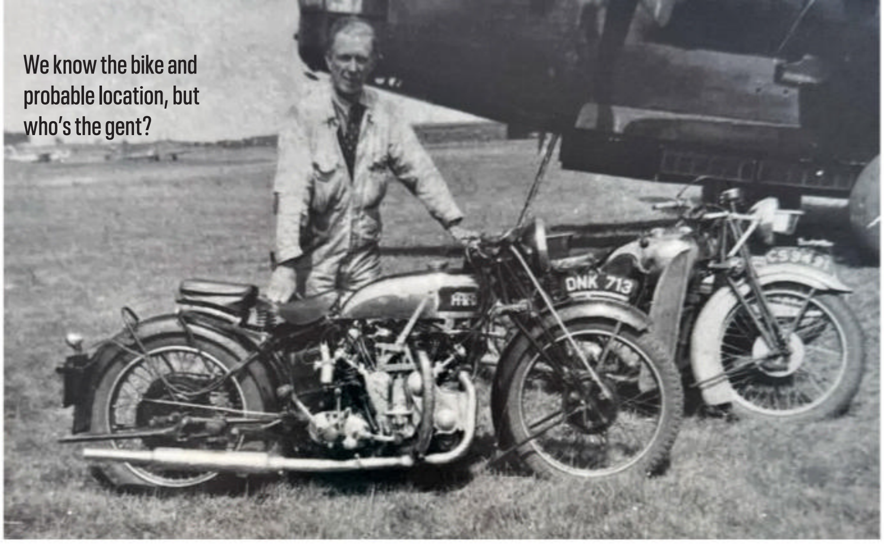
Moriwaki Foresight

Back in the 1980s, the Moriwaki Foresight was the exhaust to have, what with its funky cooling fins and black and silver stripes. And now the company has announced it's going back into production. It's shown here on a Yamaha XSR900 custom, but there's no word on fitments or prices.

Buy Ewan's Guzzi

Star Wars bloke Ewan McGregor is thinning out his bike collection and is selling a 1973 Guzzi V7 Sport. It's had a full restoration and engine rebuild and is apparently ready to ride – well, it is if you've got $46,000. See the eBay ad at ebay.com/itm/177252645832.

CYCLE GARDEN



We know the bike and probable location, but who's the gent?

BONHAMS

WWII Vincent for sale

Period photo sheds light on Rapide's fascinating history

In the left side of the tank of this 1937 Series A Vincent-HRD Rapide is a small lead-filled repair which is thought to have been undertaken during the bike's wartime air service. "We're still researching the bike's history and this photograph," says Bonhams' Ben Walker, who will be auctioning the bike at the Stafford Show on October 12. "It's all quite fascinating."

Ben's research so far suggests the photo was taken at RAF Langham in Norfolk. "The plane is clearly a Consolidated B-24 Liberator, which Coastal Command used for anti-submarine patrols over the North Sea. Combined with some handwritten notes and the grass airfield, RAF Langham is the most likely location. Hopefully the RAF museum can confirm that. But as for the gentleman... if any *Classic Bike* readers have any information on him I'd love to hear from them."

The bike also had a famous road tester. "Before leaving the factory, this machine was put through its paces by George Brown [*the successful racer who headed up Vincent's Experimental Department*]," adds Ben. "He joined Vincent-HRD in 1934 and had a reputation for pushing machines to their limits. In one instance, a police officer claimed Brown was speeding at 110mph and the magistrate dismissed the charge, stating it was 'impossible'."

This bike is the 13th of 78 Series A Rapides ever built, and one of only a handful known to retain its original frame, engine, gearbox and registration number. It was restored by Colin Jenner, who ran a specialist Vincent workshop for 20 years. He bought the Rapide incomplete, in unrestored condition.

If you would like to buy it, Bonhams' estimate is £180,000 to £240,000, but we suspect it will go for a lot more than that.

Tiddlers' 1200-mile run

A group of 15 sub-175cc classics recently completed a rerun of the 1903 Paris-Madrid race, taking five days to complete the 1200-mile route. "We had three Ducati 175s from the early 1960s, two Triumph Terriers, three MV Agusta 125s, a Morini 175 Turismo, a few 125 and 175 Hondas and a Mondial," says organiser Russell Benney. "All riders finished, albeit two on back-up machines – the Morini threw a big end at half distance and a Ducati entered the Van of Shame just south of Paris with electrical problems."

RUSSELL BENNEY

A scenic stop-off at the Chambord chateau en route

Russell's next event is the excellent Three Moors Run – the jewel in the tiddler crown, taking in three days and 500 miles of deserted west country roads for sub-175 machines built before 1970. Contact Russell@phaseone.co.uk

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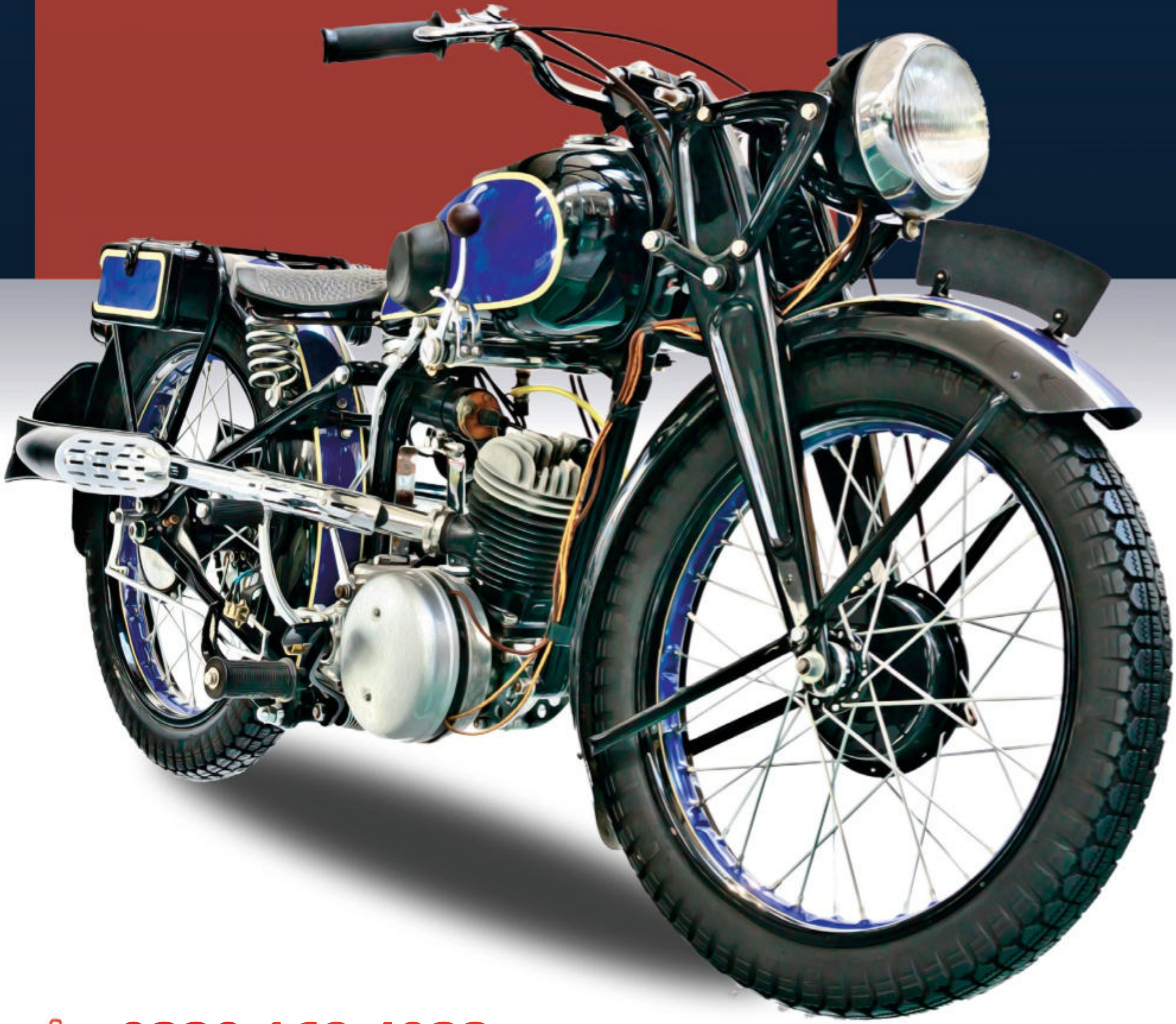

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KAWASAKI
PROJOINT CUSTOM FABRICATIONS
Santa Pod

Wowing with lightning reactions in Old School Stockers was Dean Stevens on his dad's 750 H2. He ran 8.85s at 142mph in the final, just losing out to Steve Howe's 1260cc Suzuki.

Dragstalgia

June's scorching weather tested machines and riders at Santa Pod's drag meeting, but couldn't stop some great motorcycles and racing. Photographer **Keith Lee** was there

The heat and humidity at this year's edition of Dragstalgia was problematic for both motorcycles and riders, with a number of machines suffering engine damage. Unfortunately, this included the legendary Hogslayer Norton, which experienced major front motor failure.

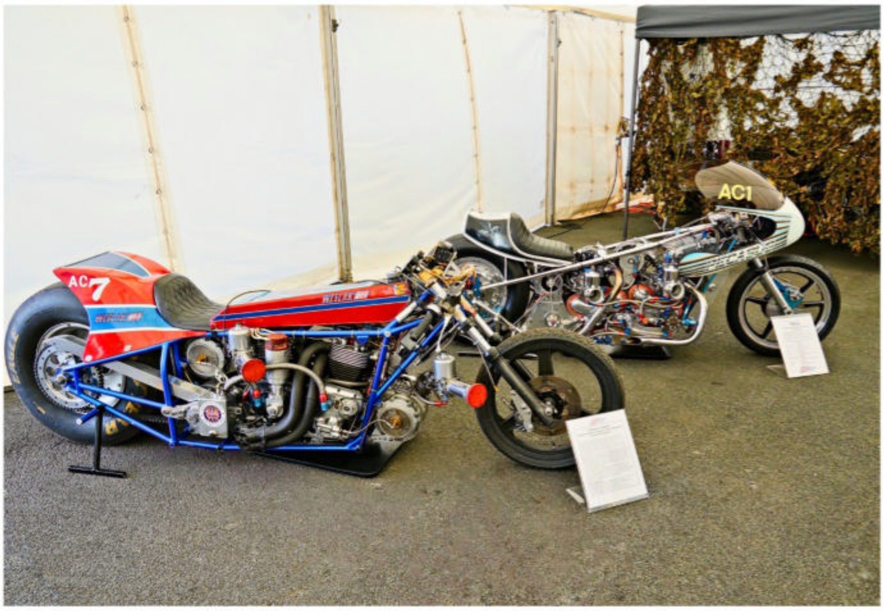
However, there was still a weekend of great machines, racing and noise. One highlight of this popular nostalgia event was the arrival of a contingent all the way from New Zealand, with Michael 'Spike' Lauria and Ron Smith riding a pair of very neatly prepared Triumphs.

Star exhibit among the interesting machines on display was John Hobbs' double-engined Weslake, celebrating 50 years since it first made its spectacular debut at Santa Pod.

If you missed this year, definitely get Dragstalgia pencilled in for 2026.

FOR OVER 40 YEARS
Santa Pod Raceway
AC 200

There were three twin-engined Norton machines. This 1700cc device of Gary Norman is similar to Hogslayer, in being unblown and using Hilborn fuel injection. Unlike the famous American bike, it has a three-speed transmission. The BM planetary overdrive unit suffered damage after a couple of early runs, which was a shame as Gary had invited Steve Parrish to try riding something a little different. Alongside, it was the second time out at Dragstalgia for the 350 blown Triumph ridden by Matt Owens, which sounded very sweet.



In the foreground is John Hobb's 'Hobbit', powered by two supercharged Weslake twins fuelled by nitro methane. It's capable of 8-sec quarters at over 170mph. Behind is the twin-engined Pegasus Norton of Ian Messenger and Derek Chinn, another machine capable of low 8-sec quarter times.

The NSA Shootout finalists. The front row from left are NZ visitors Ron Smith, Andy Urwin-Wells and runner-up Spike Lauria, whose 883cc supercharged Triumph is on the left. In the blue are winner Colin Fallows (who did a PB of 10.98s/131mph) and son Rob, behind the ex-Mick Butler 1000cc twin motor Norton, restored by Colin for owner Roy Webb.

1964 BRITISH
INTERGALACTIC
CUSTOM SHOP
UNAUTHORISED DEALER

Wayne Allman's blown BSA has an inlet using the frame tubes for fuel delivery. Raced at the '64 Drag Festival by Geoff Garside, who worked for BSA, it'll be sympathetically restored so Wayne can race it.

KESTREL BEER
ARP
Santa Pod Raceway
Slick Tricks RACING
DPS 209

In the late 1970s, Tony Lewis raced an unusual combination in the Pro Street class, putting lots of work into a Triumph 750 with a Weslake four-valve head and Garrett turbocharger. It did impressive 9-sec runs. Tony had sold it but, more than 40 years later, he's bought it back. After much restoration, he was racing it once more.

WORDS: KEITH LEE PHOTOGRAPHY: KEITH LEE

Diary dates...

July 23-24 Beezumph 29
Cadwell Park circuit, Lincolnshire.
The Triumph and Rocket 3 Owners Club have a production racers theme this year, marking five decades since Slippery Sam's last TT win.
beezumph.com

July 25 VMCC Founders Day
Stanford Hall, near Lutterworth, Leic.
This year's event celebrates 50 years of the Morini club and Italian V-twins. Plus, oodles of fine machinery, a wall of death and a cracking autojumble.
foundersday.co.uk

July 25-27 British Superbikes
Brands Hatch circuit, Kent.
Yes, modern bikes. But BSB is the world's leading domestic series, and Brands is great for us spectators.
britishsuperbike.com

July 25 Summer Classic Motorcycle Show Jumble
South of England Showground, Ardingly, West Sussex.
All welcome, though aimed more towards modern classics. Autojumble and plenty of bikes for sale.
elkpromotions.co.uk

July 27 National BMW Airhead Day
Sammy Miller Motorcycle Museum, Bashley, New Milton, Hampshire.
Wind-chilled boxers get a day all to themselves down at Sammy's gaff.
sammymiller.co.uk

August 2-3 CRMC road racing
Donington Park circuit, Leicestershire.
Loads of race action for bikes from 1945 to 1994, plus displays, demos and a sprinkling of famous names.
crmc.co.uk

August 3 Triumph Owners Meet
Sammy Miller Motorcycle Museum, Bashley, New Milton, Hampshire.
Meriden machinery at the museum.
sammymiller.co.uk

August 9-10 Heritage Sprint
Betteshanger Park, near Deal, Kent.
Classic bike show, festival and old-school sprint all rolled into one.
heritagesprint.co.uk

Rescued, revived & ridden

The classic bikes that you have found, restored or just taken for a ride

Found in a cupboard and now living in a garage, but Paul's SS50 has a history of family use

PAUL GLOSSOP

RESCUED

Family connection

In 1977, when I was 19, I moved into a flat that had a storage cupboard on the ground floor. When I opened my cupboard, I found a Honda SS50 inside – identical to the one I'd owned at 15, but with a bent pedal and snapped exhaust studs. It belonged to a chap who happily sold it for £10 and a bottle of scotch.

By mid-'78, I had it MoT'd and running well. I got married that year and my wife used it for commuting and visiting her parents. When my daughter reached 16, she used it for work for a while – but although still a runner, it has spent most of its recent years in the back of my garage.

I probably ought to sell it to someone who'd look after it better than me, but it's so entwined in the history of the family that I can't really bring myself to get rid of it. So, back in the garage it goes…

Paul Glossop, Market Deeping

RIDDEN

True blue G/S

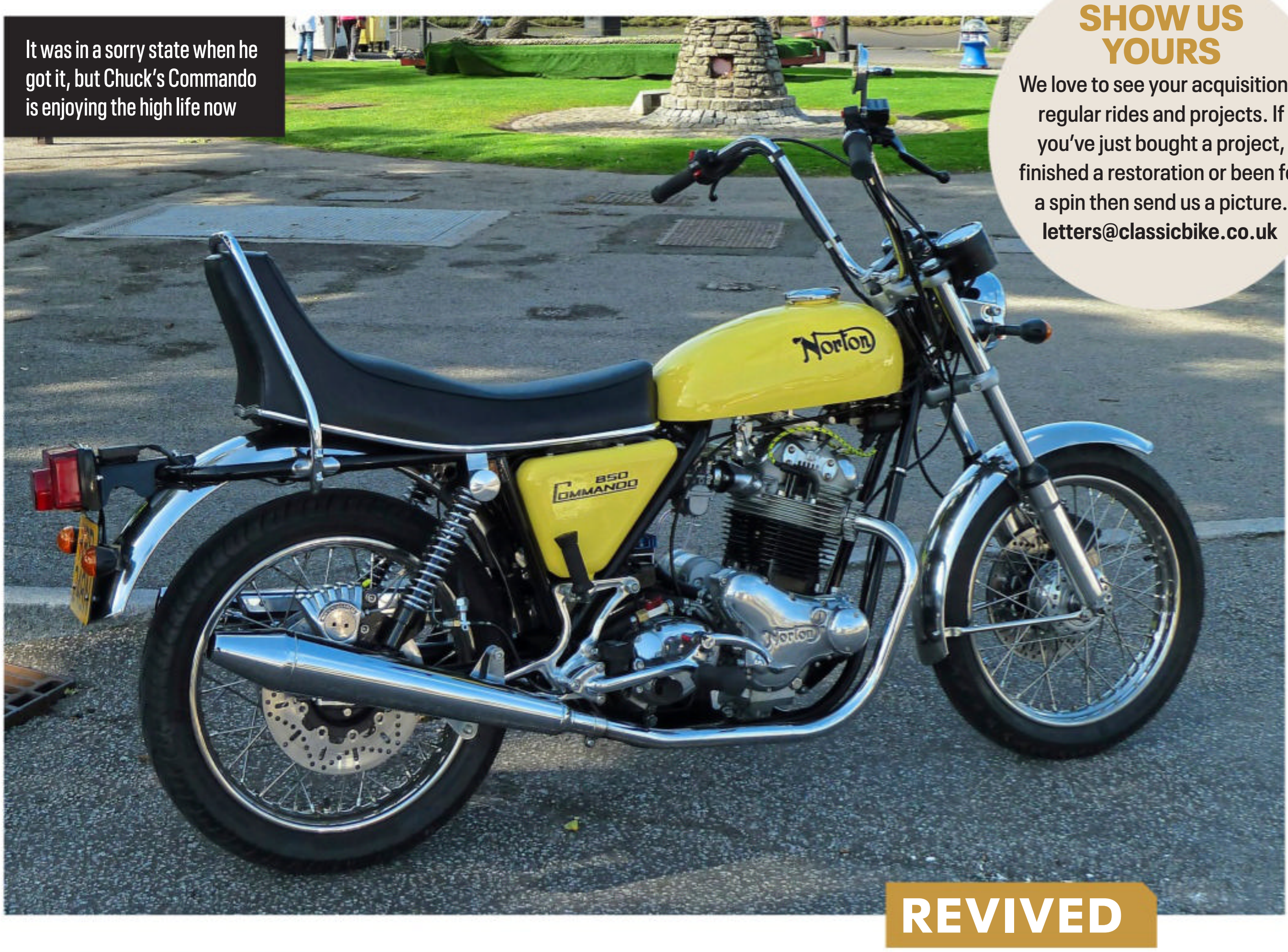
I particularly enjoyed the recent article on the R80 G/S ('We Want It', May issue). The main pic here is of my G/S, which I bought secondhand in the mid-'80s. It shows the authentic colour – darker than the machine seemed in *CB* (maybe something was lost in the reproduction).

The smaller pic shows the G/S in the environment it revelled in. Mine was used for many years, mostly as a two-up trail bike and winter transport, although it's only used on the tarmac now. It has three sensible mods. One is the standard front mudguard dropped and reversed to keep dirt off the rest of the bike. Another is the Corbin seat, which enables rider and passenger to travel more than 50 miles before numb-bum syndrome kicks in. And thirdly a more sensible sidestand, as the standard one is not good for the 'shortening legs' syndrome as one gets older. All the standard items are in the shed, ready to be reinstated when the need arises, along with the panniers.

Robert Wilson

ROBERT WILSON

CHUCK MATHESON



It was in a sorry state when he got it, but Chuck's Commando is enjoying the high life now

SHOW US YOURS

We love to see your acquisitions, regular rides and projects. If you've just bought a project, finished a restoration or been for a spin then send us a picture.
letters@classicbike.co.uk

Robert's R80 G/S is still used on the road, but has done its share of off-roading (inset)

REVIVED

Rise of a Hi-Rider

This is my 1975 Norton Commando Hi-Rider, imported from the USA in 2022 as a non-runner that had been sitting idle for years. It was missing its exhaust system, rear light cowl, head steady and left-hand side panel. The cylinder head had no valves, guides or springs, while the right-hand cylinder was scored and its piston had a missing gudgeon pin and circlip. To top it all, the starter motor was full of sand!

I stripped it and got internal engine work carried out by Tam McKean engineering in Dumfries – the cylinders were relined and got new pistons, the missing parts were fitted to the head; the gearbox was also stripped and fitted with new bearings and seals. After that, I rebuilt the bike over the next year or so. The frame, swingarm and yokes were powder coated, the tank and panels were finished in yellow as on the first '71 Hi-Riders. I also rebuilt the wheels with 18in stainless rims and spokes, and fitted Brembo brakes with home-made adapters and Girling floating discs. It also got a one-off wiring loom with Tri-Spark ignition, MOSFET rectifier, WOSP starter motor and an iridium battery.
Chuck Matheson, Lochfoot, Scotland

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6	CTC900C	9 Dr Chest	620x257x380	070110903	£84.99	£107.98	£101.99
	CTC500C	5 Dr Cabinet	680x330x765	070116002	£144.99	£179.98	£173.99
	CTC800C	8 Dr Chest/Cab Set	616x295x1027	070113032	£139.98	£173.99	£167.98
2	CTC700C	7 Dr Cabinet	680x330x875	070116009	£169.98	£210.00	£203.98
	CTC1300C	13 Dr Combi	680x335x1304	070113042	£189.98	-	£227.98
PROFESSIONAL RANGE							
5	CTC103C	3 Dr Step Up Chest	691x310x256	070113016	£74.99	-	£89.99
3	CTC109	9 Dr Chest	685x305x419	070113211	£139.98	-	£167.98
4	CTC107C	7 Dr Cabinet	739x461x953	070113126	£249.00	-	£298.80

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	CBB205C‡	5 Dr Chest	710x315x420	070118016	£145.99	£175.19
1	CBB209C◆	9 Dr Chest	710x315x420	070118032	£149.98	£179.98
	CBB210C	10 Dr Chest	710x315x475	070118037	£169.98	£203.98
	CBB215C	5 Dr Cabinet	758x468x815	070118052	£249.00	£298.80
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CML3	2200x685mm	770mm	450kg	020110143	£449.00	£538.80
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11/550	2.5HP	50L	000119505	£159.98	£203.98	£191.98
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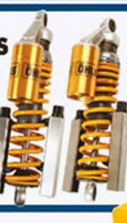

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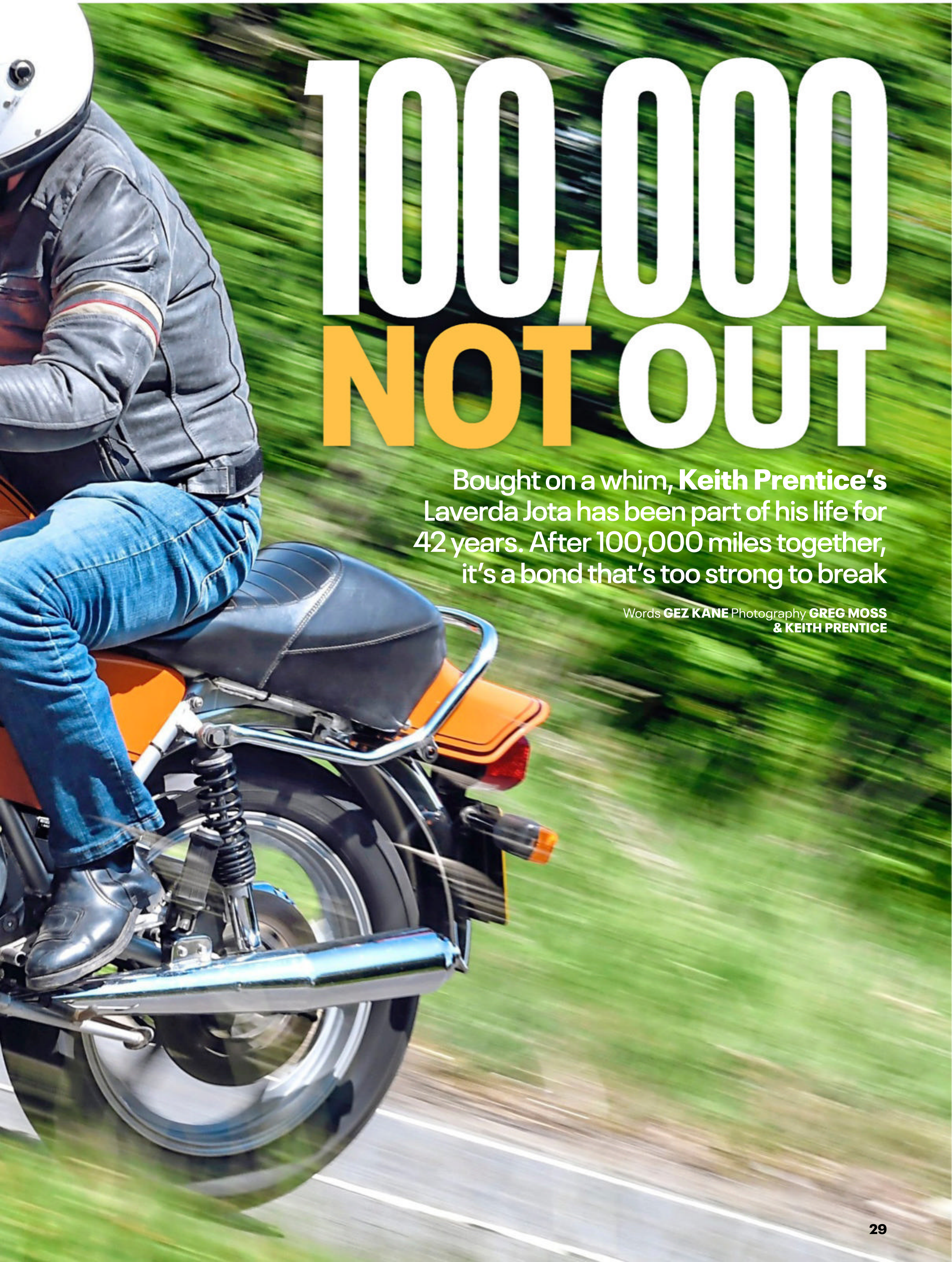


100,000 NOT OUT

Bought on a whim, **Keith Prentice's** Laverda Jota has been part of his life for 42 years. After 100,000 miles together, it's a bond that's too strong to break

Words **GEZ KANE** Photography **GREG MOSS & KEITH PRENTICE**

There are always big numbers involved with Laverda's imposing three-cylinder superbike. 981cc and over 90bhp. 140mph. 250kg (551lb). But with Keith Prentice and his 1982 Series 2 Jota, the really impressive ones are 42 – the number of years he's owned the bike – and the figure on the odometer, which reads over 100,000 miles.

What's perhaps even more remarkable is that, over more than four decades of ownership, the Jota has never been off the road – save for essential maintenance – and it's never been restored. Up until it chalked up its 40th birthday a couple of years back, it's always been taxed and MoT'd. Its odometer on the Nippon Denso speedo clicked round to read zero for the second time in the bike's life just a few weeks back. I guess Keith must like his bike a bit.

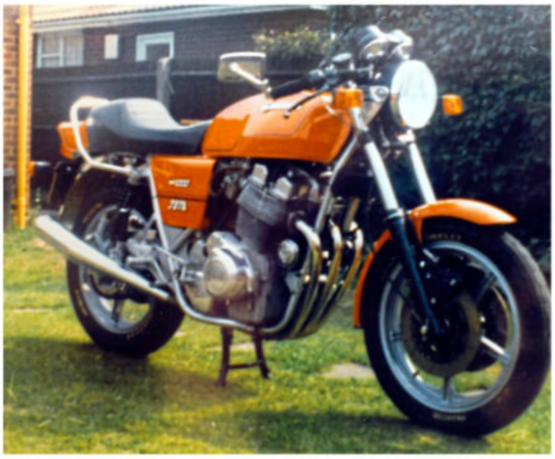
"I love it," he smiles. "Luckily, I've never been in a position where I've needed to sell it. If anyone asks what it's worth or what I'd sell it for, I tell them £50,000. I always say I'll be buried with it. I love riding it, I love the attention it gets when I'm out on it and I still love the look of it. It's not perfect and it's not 100% catalogue correct, but it's how I want it to be."

Keith's long-term passion for the Breganze machines has led to him being chairman of the International Laverda Owners Club (ILOC), but he was already a Lav fan when chance brought him and this Jota together back in 1983. "I'd already bought my first Laverda – a Montjuic – and loved it," he recalls. "I lived in Dartford and a mate was going over to Moto Vecchia in Colliers Wood to test ride a Morini 3½, so I went with him. While he was out on the 3½, I spotted a Jota in the showroom – and cheekily asked if I could have a road test. The salesman's first response was a fairly blunt 'No' – but when I gestured outside at my Monjuic, that soon turned into 'Certainly sir'. I rode it and that was that. I had to have it. I wasn't looking for a new bike... honest."

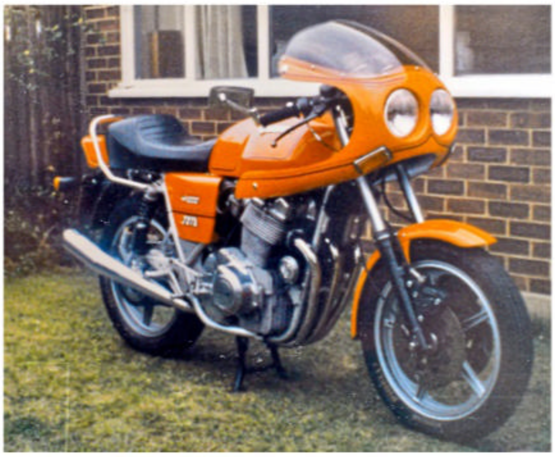
The Series 2 model Keith bought is considered by many 'Jotisti' as the best of the 180° crank 'real' Jotas. With a hydraulic clutch, the ignition moved to the left-hand end of the crank and a three-phase 210W Nippon Denso alternator, the Series 2 is the ultimate development of the original 180 concept. And what an enduring concept that proved to be. After all that time and all those miles, Keith's bike still wears its original Jota orange paintwork with just a very few marks of long-term use. The frame has never been refinished, just touched-up as required. It even has the original 'silencers' that give the bike its fearsome voice.

The Jota has had a few moments, though. "When I bought the bike, there was a hairline crack in the clutch cover. Apparently, it's down to poor design that allows clutch fluid to get in behind the piston insert for the hydraulic clutch. It's the build-up of pressure as the clutch operates which cracks the case. I'm on my third case now, although these days you can get modified cases that solve the problem.

RIGHT The bike as Keith bought it in 1983, naked as the day it was born

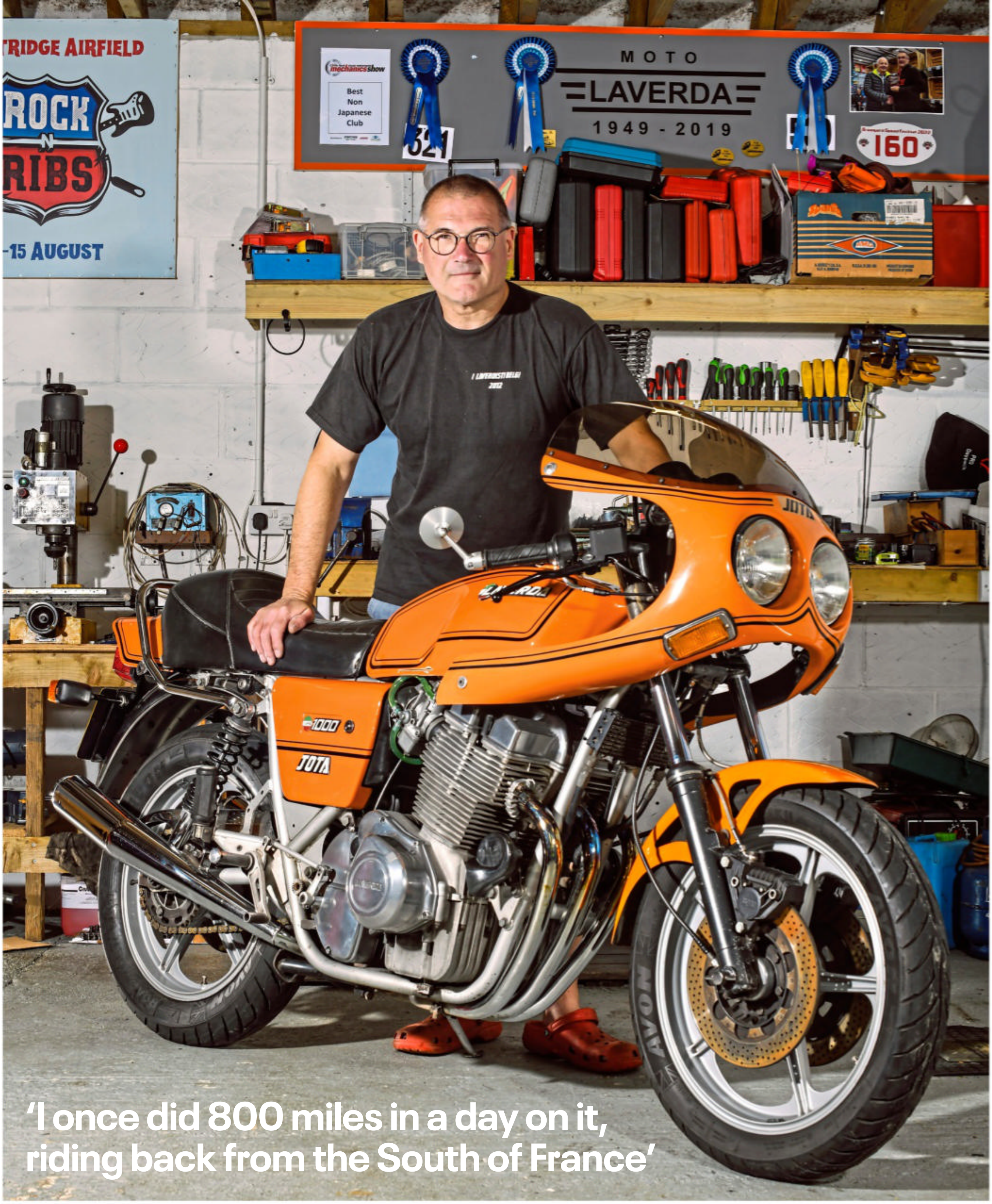


FAR RIGHT This bike's for riding, so Keith hasn't been precious about making a few mods, like the aftermarket twin-lamp fairing



RIGHT En route to a camping weekend on Exmoor in 1985. Keith (centre) with mates Lanny Parker (left, Laverda RGS) and Malcolm Smith (Honda CX650). The rest of the weekend was a bit of a blur...

XVR 499X
YMV 735Y



'I once did 800 miles in a day on it, riding back from the South of France'

ABOVE The Series 2 is sought after as the best of the 180° crank 'real' Jotas. But nobody's prising this one from Keith's hands

"A couple of years later, it started dropping out of fifth gear under load. With all the confidence of youth, I stripped the engine and gearbox down and discovered worn engagement dogs. A new pinion cured that and, touch wood, it's been fine since. A couple of years after that – 1987, I think – the centre main bearing needed replacing. The 1979 models with ball-race centre mains were known to be troublesome, but I think my issues were just bad luck. Rebuilding the pressed-up crank was beyond my abilities, so I took it to legendary Laverda specialist Phil Todd at Motodd to sort out.

"After that, I had no real problems until the late 2000s, when the engine started to burn oil. I took the head off and took it to a local engineering firm – who told me they had plenty of experience with Laverdas – to fit new valve guides. Two years later, though, it was just as bad. This time I took the whole engine to Keith Nairn at Laverda Scozia. When he turned the head upside down, two of the valve guides fell out. There was damage to the bores as well, so he supplied new pistons and rebored the barrels to first oversize. The crank was also slightly out of alignment – I'd never noticed any undue vibration – so he sorted that too."

All other tinkering has been due to minor issues rather than meaty problems. "I replaced the original Bosch ignition with a Sachse unit years ago – and when the pick-ups on that eventually failed last summer, I fitted an Ignitech system. So far, so good. The front mudguard is an aftermarket item – the originals were very prone to splitting, and mine did. Obviously, the

LAVERDA
LAVERDA

Major engine issues have been few, although two valve guides did fall out once – after the head had been removed twin-headlight fairing is non-standard too. My bike was originally supplied naked, but I got this one fitted in 1983 at a place called JP Customs, I think. I took the bike for a fitting and they offered up various styles of fairing before I decided on this one. They made a bespoke mounting bracket for it and sorted all the wiring. I think the indicators are from a Datsun Cherry."

Keith has replaced the original clutch master cylinder with a smaller-bore 13mm Brembo unit (the original is 15mm) to provide a lighter lever action, and replaced the front brake master cylinder to match it. But other than that, his Jota is almost startlingly unchanged from the bike he rode home all those years ago.

The front brake discs are nearing minimum thickness and due to be replaced – hardly surprising, as they're the originals. So are the calipers. The fork stanchions have never been rechromed, the sliders have never been painted, and the seals have only been replaced once.

The wheels still wear their original factory paint too, with only one set of bearings having been replaced – the rears in 2018. After rotting out, the exhaust collector box has been replaced by a stainless steel Keihan part, but the downpipes are still the originals (rechromed at the end of 2023). Even the seat cover and base are original – Viking Seats replaced the foam in 2014, but carefully refitted the factory cover.

Keith is rightly proud of his Jota, but this doesn't mean it's led a cosseted life. Far from it. As is only fitting for the chairman of the owners' club, he's put the bike to good use. "I've been all over on it," he says. "When I first had it, it was my everyday transport. When I got married and had a family I didn't get to use it as much, but I still kept my hand in when I could. Since I packed in work in 2017 though, I've been able to get out on it lots more. I used to do the UK National Road Rally, I've ridden it at Shelsley Walsh and loads of UK ILOC (iloc.co.uk) runs and rallies. Being a member of the club has really expanded my enjoyment of all my Laverdas. I ride with the French and Belgian Laverda clubs regularly, too – and once covered 800 miles in day, returning home from an event in the South of France. I got to my planned overnight hotel to find it locked up and in darkness, so just pressed on all the way."

There was also a curious reaction to Keith's big, orange Jota. "I was riding through the Kennedy Tunnel near Antwerp in Belgium with a mate on another Laverda," he recalls. "A car pulled alongside me and the passenger

LAVERDA
1000
JOTA
XVW 499X

ABOVE Original 'silencers' give vent to the Jota's spine-tinglingly raucous voice

Keith's essential tools

Astra Pillar drill

"I really wouldn't be without this. I bought it on Gumtree about eight years ago and only paid £80 for it. It's old - from 1984 in fact - and made in Taiwan, but it's a solid, well-made piece of kit. It'll take bits up to ⅝ in (about 15mm) so it'll handle most jobs on a bike. I use it all the time, no more wonky holes for me."

Clarke electric impact driver

"Another invaluable tool for working on old bikes. When you need an impact driver, you need it. It's great for freeing off stubborn fasteners and loosening fork damper rod bolts without them just spinning in the fork bottom. As it's electric, you don't need a compressor like you would with an air gun. I think it only cost around £50-60."

Home-made test light

"This is really simple - but so useful. I made it up ages ago. It's just a 12-volt bulb with a couple of wires attached. I use it to find what's live and what isn't as I work through electrical issues methodically and locate where the problem is. I was an electrical engineer by trade, so I suppose I should be good at sorting electrics."

SPECIFICATION | 1982 LAVERDA JOTA SERIES 2

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION **Type** Air-cooled dohc transverse inline triple **Capacity** 981cc **Bore x stroke** 75 x 74mm **Compression ratio** 9:1 **Carburetion** 3 x 32mm Dell'Orto **Ignition** Bosch electronic (replaced by Ignitech on Keith's bike) **Primary/final drive** triplex chain/chain **Clutch** Wet multiplate **Gearbox** Five-speed **CHASSIS** **Frame** Tubular double cradle **Front suspension** 38mm Marzocchi forks **Rear suspension** Marzocchi twinshocks **Front brakes** Twin 280mm (11in) Brembo discs **Rear brake** 280mm (11in) Brembo disc **Wheels** Five-spoke cast alloy **Tyres** 100/90 V18 (F), 120/90 V18 (R) **DIMENSIONS** **Wheelbase** 1470mm (57.9in) **Seat height** 835mm (32.9in) **Fuel capacity** 20 litres (5.3 gal) **Dry weight** 233kg (515lb) **PERFORMANCE** **Power** 90bhp at 7500rpm (claimed) **Torque** 66lb ft at 7000rpm (claimed) **Top speed** 140mph

wound down the window and threw a cabbage at me. Maybe it's some sort of Belgian greeting..."

In all the 100,000 miles Keith and his big triple have been together, only one other person has ever ridden it (apart, perhaps, from a brief mechanic's test ride after the engine work). "I let a mate called Malcolm Smith – no, not that one – from the local bike club have a quick spin in the early '80s," he reveals. But now he's trusting me to take his baby out near his North Dorset home. "You're only the second person apart from me to ride it," he cheerfully reminds me. No pressure then...

Easing through town, that modified clutch is certainly welcome. Keeping the revs low enough to attract only admiring glances rather than disapproving glares, the Jota feels in superb fettle. I'd never guess it was a 100,000-mile veteran. But it's when I get to the swoops and curves of the A30 that the Jota really shows what a special machine it is. There's no way this bike feels its age – and that's testament to both the original design and the care and attention Keith has lavished on it over the last 40 or so years.

Get the engine spinning above 4000rpm and it delivers what you desire and expect of the big triple, as it hurls itself forward on a wave of midrange torque. Get above 6000rpm and there's another step up as those 4C cams, unrestrictive Jota silencers and 32mm carbs do their thing. There's no doubt that the Laverda is a big bike, but its bulk melts away as it arcs through flowing bends and despatches the Dorset topography with just a tease of the throttle. And the noise is nothing short of epic. Laverda – with a little help from UK concessionaires the Slater brothers – certainly got it right with the Jota.

Picking faults is pointless. Sure, the twin front discs need a good, hard squeeze to really do their thing, but it's par for the course on an early '80s muscle bike. Changing direction swiftly in low-speed corners requires a bit of effort too, but this is all part of the glorious Jota experience – and on fast, sweeping roads the Laverda is in its element. I can see why Keith has enjoyed every moment and why the idea of parting with it has never crossed his mind.

My morning's ride disappears in a blur. This is a truly great bike, and I feel more than a prick of jealousy as I head back to Keith's house to reluctantly hand back his pride and joy. Fast, exciting, engaging and compelling – and delivering that delicious, haunting three-cylinder soundtrack – I've enjoyed every minute on this bike. And nobody threw a cabbage at me.

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HOW TO BECOME A BETTER RIDER – NOW!

Series 5 Transform your riding skills this summer with expert riding advice from the teams at National Highways, MCN and Rapid Training

For most of us, this is the time of year when we're out on our bikes at every opportunity, enjoying those riding trips we planned in the dark months of winter. It's the perfect time to brush up on your skills, or pick up some new ones, so you can make this summer your smoothest, safest and most fun yet. That's where this new series of six videos comes in, designed to boost the skills of every level of motorcyclist.

1 Reading the road The single most transformational thing you can do for your riding is to improve your ability to see and interpret the road ahead. Every other skill you develop is built on this foundation. This video reveals how to use limit points to improve your cornering, how to scan without getting information overload, and using peripheral vision.

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5 Steering Steering sounds like an easy skill to master, but if you don't understand exactly how to steer faster, you'll struggle to ride faster and smoother, and can get yourself in trouble if you need to avoid something in a hurry. Most riders know about countersteering, but that's just the start. Learn how long your steering input should be, why your lower body has such an effect on the steering, and how keeping your arms loose can dramatically improve how the bike tracks.

6 Throttle control The throttle does much more than just change your speed. We show how it can improve your cornering – increasing front-end grip and feel on entry, balancing the bike mid-corner, and creating grip on exit.

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Mocheck in its 1980s heyday – note that Ian had taken on Kawasaki as well as Honda by then

GENIUS
CHECK

ClassicBike AT LUNCH WITH…

Ian Tay

He co-founded Mocheck, which rose to become one of Britain's biggest, most innovative dealers of the 1980s. And then it went pop…

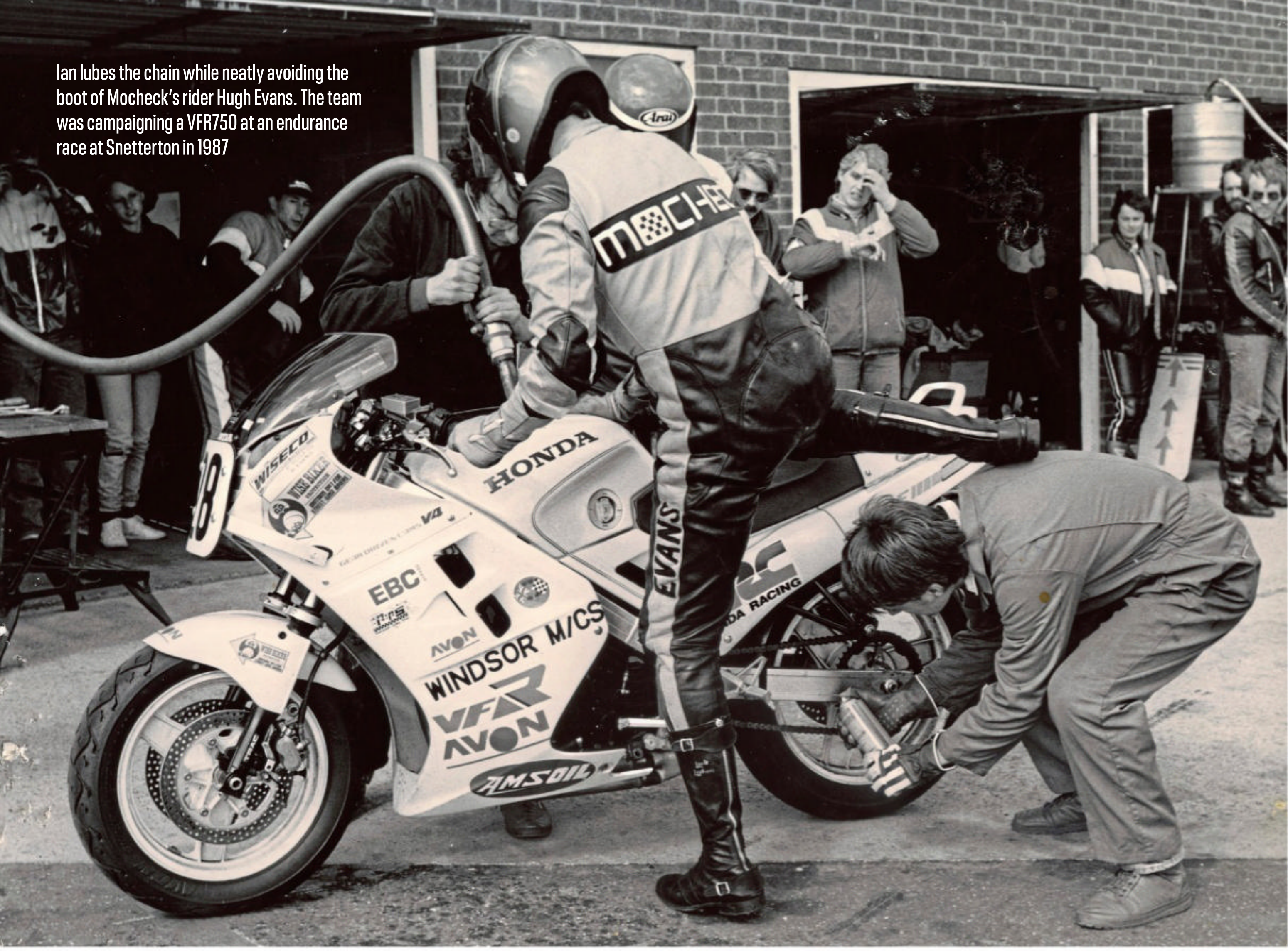
Words **JOHN WESTLAKE** Photography **JOHN WESTLAKE**, **BAUER**, **MOCHECK STAFF**

Vast motorcycle showrooms filled with gleaming bikes and racks of clothing stretching to the horizon are par for the course these days, but back in the early 1980s they were a rare breed, with Mocheck leading the way. But this south London dealership was no soulless supermarket. The two young owners had a go at everything – from building race bikes for Tony Rutter and Tom Herron to being Hesketh's production facility. Mocheck was a commercial and cultural phenomenon. Until it wasn't, but we'll come to that.

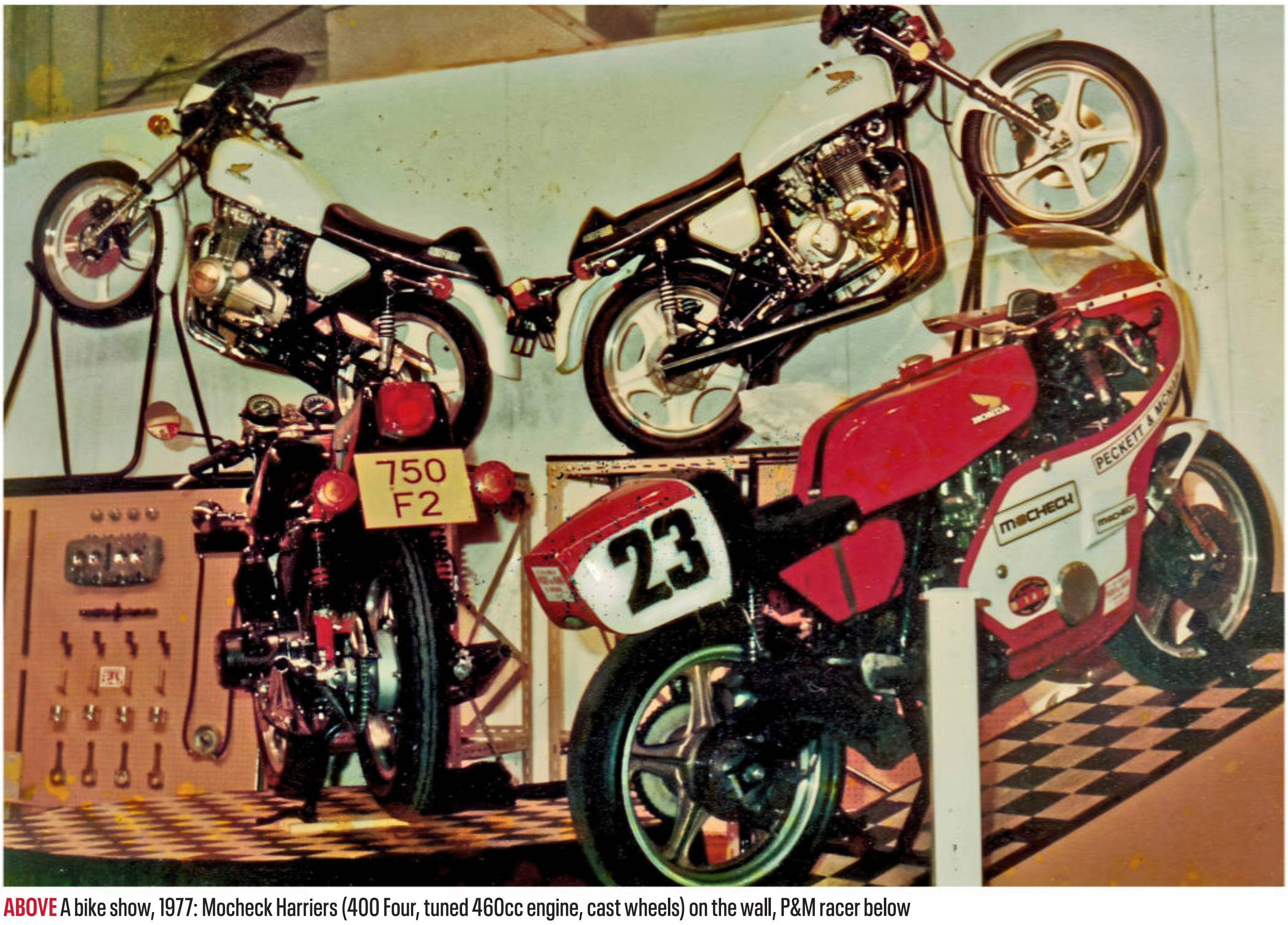
It was started by Ian Tay and Tony Ackner, a couple of 19-year-old ex-public schoolboys who decided that motorcycles would be more fun than university and a job in the city.

"Nice young chaps like me usually did one of two things," says Ian, as we await our pies at his local cafe. "If you were bright, you became a stockbroker; if you were thick, you became an insurance broker at Lloyds. That's where Tony worked – he wasn't actually thick, but he ended up there."

Ian, meanwhile, was working as a mechanic in George Clarke, a London dealer next to Brixton prison. He'd had bikes since he was 16, his older brother owned a Vincent and he had no desire to follow the conventional 'posh boy' route.



Ian lubes the chain while neatly avoiding the boot of Mocheck's rider Hugh Evans. The team was campaigning a VFR750 at an endurance race at Snetterton in 1987



ABOVE A bike show, 1977: Mocheck Harriers (400 Four, tuned 460cc engine, cast wheels) on the wall, P&M racer below

"I was learning how to service Japanese bikes from the head mechanic there who was quite go-ahead – he wasn't just into the Brit stuff," he says. "This was quite unusual back then because most dealers dismissed all the imports as 'Jap crap'."

Sniffing an opportunity, in 1973 Ian and Tony decided to open a bike shop specialising in Japanese bikes. "I called him Tone the Moan for obvious reasons – out of principle he'd moan about everything. But he was sensible and as straight as a die – his uncle was a high court judge. We made a good team." Listening to Ian ping exuberantly from one tale to the next, often interrupting himself with details from a previous story and adding verbal sidebars to facts he mentioned 10 minutes ago, it's easy to imagine Tony's role as a steadying hand on the Mocheck tiller.

"Starting a shop was a big step, but we were young," continues Ian. "Tone the Moan and I had been to St Paul's, which is one the best public schools in London, and what public schools give you is confidence. Whereas some people would wait until they're 50 to start a bike business, we did it at 19."

Ian then saw a Clapham garage up for sale in the local paper. "The owner wanted £3000 to take the lease off him. That included all his car servicing equipment and tools, so we borrowed the money off Tony's mother and bought it. Tony came up with the Mocheck name and we printed a batch of leaflets, putting them under the pillion straps of bikes parked along Fleet Street, Oxford Street and Strand."

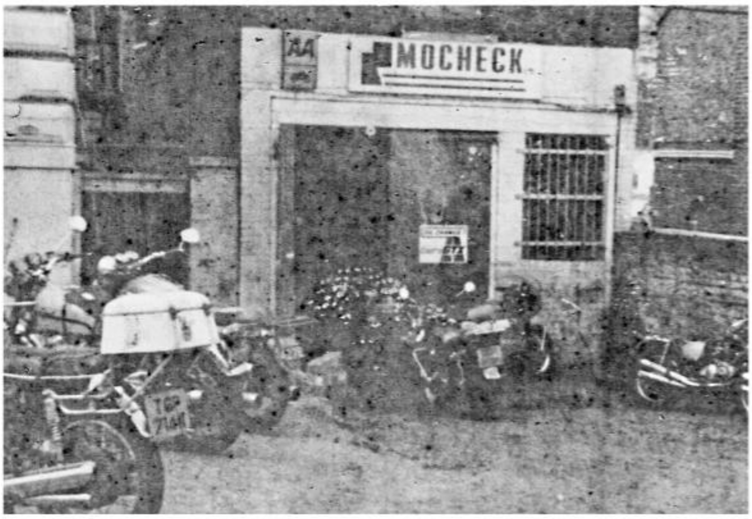
Marketing done, Ian and Tony got on with clearing out and painting their new garage. "Before we'd finished painting we had the first call from someone whose bike had broken down. That was a good sign.

"We invested in some new kit too – we bought a diagnostic machine called a Souriau, which was basically an oscilloscope that showed the resistance across the points so you could tell if the gap wasn't right. We got some vacuum gauges to balance the carbs too, but 99% of the time they were spot on because the factory had set them back in Japan. We were mostly just changing oil and filters and supplying consumables like brake pads, tyres, air filters and chains.

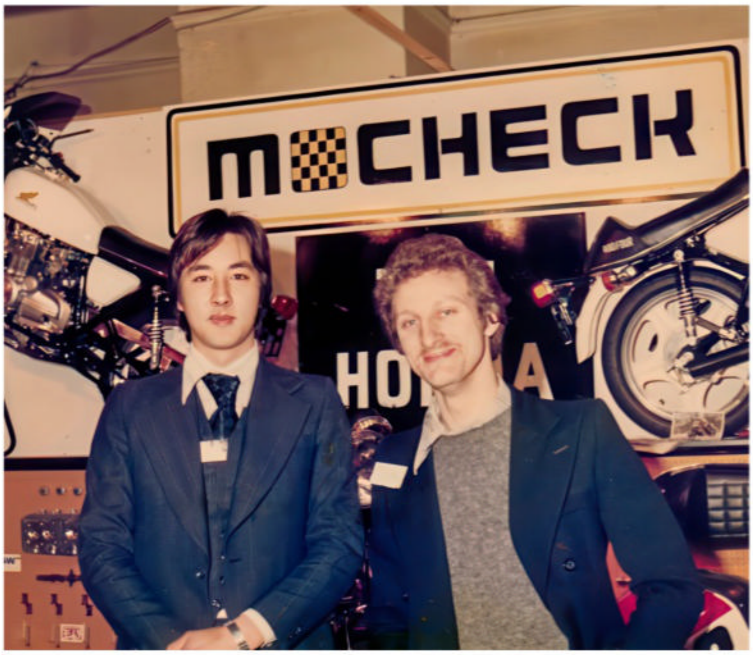
"The bikes were things like Honda CB250 K4s, CD175s and the odd glamour bike like a CB500 Four or a CB750. It was mainly Hondas, I guess because they were the bestselling Japanese bikes at the time. We soon had enough work to take on a chap I used to work with at George Clarke's called John Ryan. He was a more experienced mechanic than me [he later built Mocheck's race bikes] but in fact, because the Japanese bikes were better designed and made than the British stuff, they were pretty easy to work on."

Then, in 1974, disaster struck. "I was out doing a bike pick-up with our £300 Escort van and a bike trailer. When I came back, the road was closed and fire engines were everywhere." An auxiliary fuel tank on a tripod and someone welding nearby had somehow conspired to set the whole place alight. "It wasn't burned to the ground," says Ian, "but it was unusable."

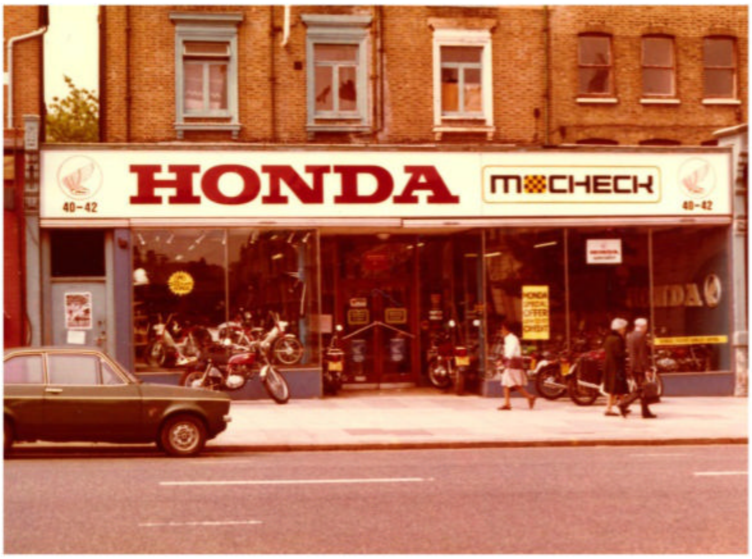
Fortunately, because of Tony's background in insurance, Mocheck had taken some out, so they



ABOVE The only known shot of Mocheck's first ever workshop at Kings Avenue in London. This was taken in 1972



ABOVE Ian (left) and business partner Tony Ackner looking ridiculously young in 1977



ABOVE By 1976 the showroom on Clapham High Street was flying could afford to look for new premises. “We noticed there was an empty shop in Clapham High Street and a warehouse up the road that we could use to store bikes. Obviously we didn’t know our arse from our elbow, but our fearlessness was an advantage. I phoned Honda and asked to become a dealer [despite not actually having a functioning shop at the time – Ed]. The lady at Honda said she’d pass on my message but I assumed nothing would happen.

“Then one day we were sitting outside our burned-out workshop and a Honda car went slowly past. Honda cars were rare back then, so I rushed over and sure enough it was a Honda rep checking us out. I took him to the new shop, which he liked the look of, but he wanted to talk to Mr Clarke from Pride and Clarke – the big local dealer – because it was on their patch.”

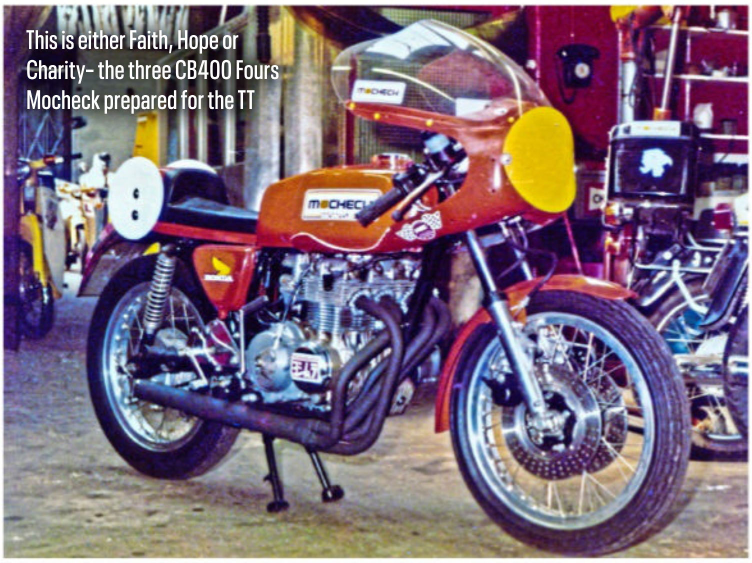
These days a big dealer might be more cagey, but back then Mr Clarke could see no harm in a couple of kids opening a shop nearby. Bingo – Ian was a Honda dealer. “Within an hour of getting the first Honda into the new showroom we’d sold one – a C50 Cub. Literally as soon as we put it outside the shop, someone bought it. From there we never looked back. Well, we did look back on a few things actually, but I’ll talk about those later.”

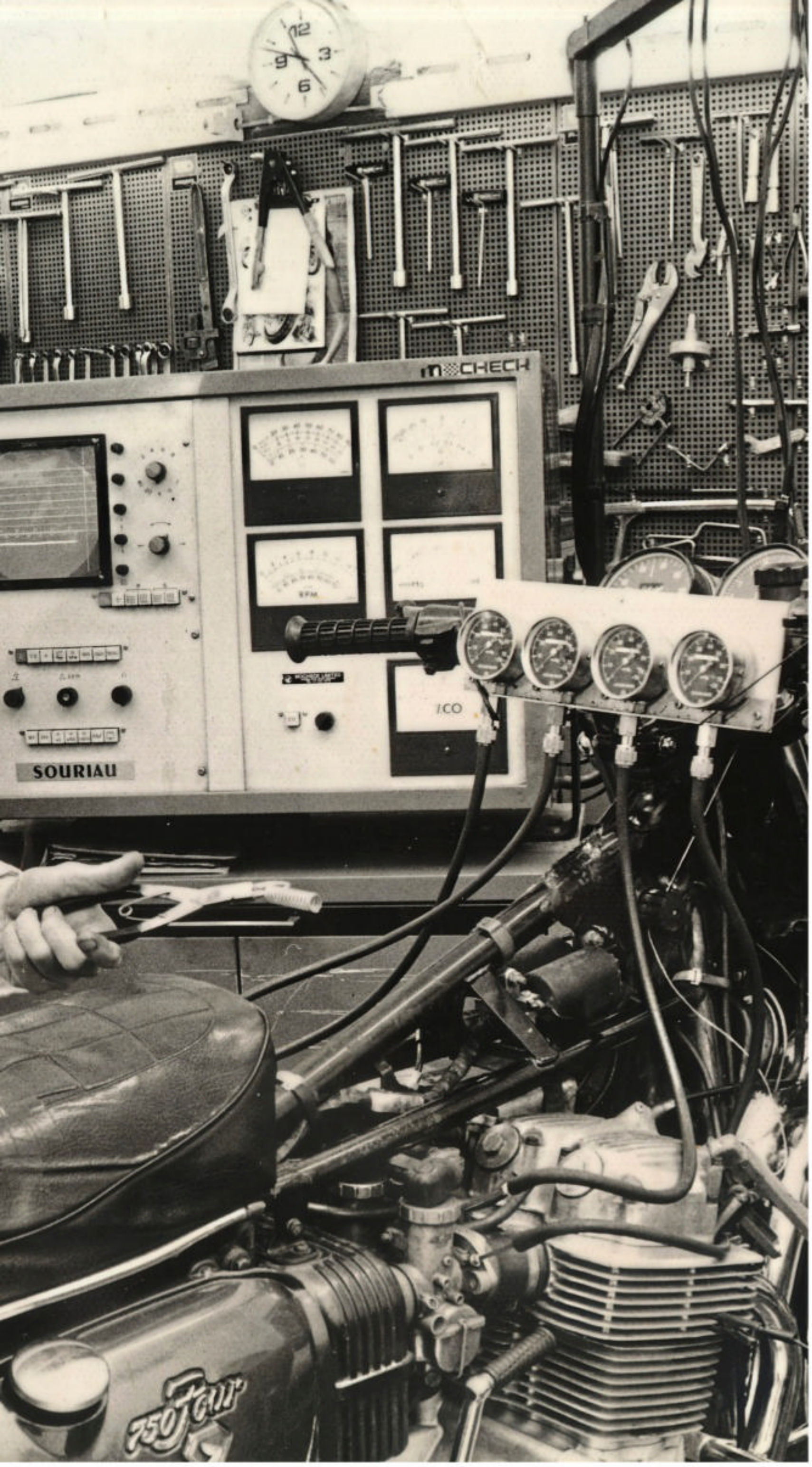
The deal Honda gave Ian and Tony meant cash flow was not a problem. With 60 days to pay, all they had to do was keep stock turning over and money would keep rolling in. “By 1975 we had C50s, CD175s, CB250 K4s, 350s, 500 Fours, and the CB750 F1 – the ugly one with a single pipe. And we quickly started selling things like Colin Seeley frame kits and his specials. And Colin did a bikini fairing and straight handlebars too, so we were soon selling a lot more than just bikes. Also, we sold Don and Derek Rickman’s chassis, which were good quality. Selling this more exotic stuff was probably why we started to grow.”

By 1975 Mocheck was gaining a reputation as the place to go if you wanted to pep up your bike – so it was almost inevitable they got into racing. “Honda loaned one of the bike newspapers three CB400s to enter in the Production TT – they called them Faith, Hope and Charity – and asked us to prep them. We didn’t really think about it – when you’re young you don’t say no. We fitted fairings and exhausts, converted them for right-hand gear change because all the riders were used to that back then, and managed to get Tony Rutter to ride one [Norman Tricoglus, who came second in the Manx the previous year, and Alex Ayers, a Manx regular, rode the others – Ed].” The bikes weren’t competitive – Rutter came 19th – but Mocheck had caught the racing bug.

The following year Mocheck gave Hugh Evans a Honda 900 for the TT and were on course for a podium when the clutch burned out. “For 1977 we bought a Seeley frame for a Honda 750 and some Lester wheels, and made a bike that Tony [Rutter] raced in the Isle of Man against Honda Britain. It was a pile of junk – Tony was used to little 250 Yamahas and this thing probably weighed 500lb – but he finished. And we learned from that; we went to see Peckett and McNab [the up-and-coming chassis specialists].”

The Mocheck workshop was so clinical that mechanic John Ryan ended up dressing as a surgeon for this publicity shot in 1976. Note the Souriau oscilloscope in the background


This is either Faith, Hope or Charity- the three CB400 Fours Mocheck prepared for the TT



Helped by P&M, the bikes became more competitive and Mocheck's roster of riders got even more impressive. "Chas Mortimer rode our bike in the Isle of Man F3 class in 1978 and we had Roger Marshall on board that year too – I remember Roger beating Mike Hailwood at Donington on our bike when Mike fell off."

Amazingly, Ian didn't pay any of his star riders. "Everyone understood we were a dealership, not Panasonic or Hitachi. We didn't sign a contract with anyone either – the deal was that they got the prize money, which in those days was £150 to £250. Even when we had Phil Read riding for us we didn't pay him – though he did ask for some money."

For 1978, Honda UK had five race-tuned 810cc CB750Fs with big carbs and a CDI ignition instead of points. "We bought one and Tony Rutter told us that Omega would make 940cc pistons for it with new liners. So we did all that and bought a frame from Peckett and McNab. We got Tom Herron to ride so we had high hopes.

"Tom was leading Mike Hailwood on our bike – it was much faster than the Ducati – but the lugs on the frame broke at the shock mounts as he went through Union Mills. The bike just sat down on its bum and stopped. At that point we decided to quit while we were ahead and stop racing. It was the right decision – the Z1 had arrived and was super-fast, so we would have struggled to beat that if we stuck with Hondas."

Back at the shop, Ian and Tony had seen which way the wind was blowing, too. Realising that motorcyclists were buying more kit more regularly than ever before, they decided to branch out into clothing. "We had the space, and we saw everything was changing," says Ian. "The era of rockers and British bikes was coming to an end and motorcyclists were moving from black leathers to multi-colours. Loads of new full-face helmets were coming in, too.

"I don't think a lot of the older dealers who'd been selling Brit bikes for decades understood what was happening. The ones whose sons were coming into the business – Padgetts, for example – were switched on, but a lot weren't. There was a cultural shift going on."

And Mocheck were happy to ride this cultural wave. "We only sold Hondas yet we were selling 1500 bikes a year," says Ian. "Every day three or four would go out the door. The demand was extraordinary and there were loads of new Hondas appearing – the CBX1000, for example – and we used to go on dealer trips to Japan, Bell Helmets trips to California… It was an incredible time for us.

"Also, Honda UK boss Eric Sulley liked to do deals. Someone in the warehouse would tell him 'we've got 273 blue C70s in here' and the word would come through that we can get 10% off the trade price if we buy 10. That's an amazing deal given that the trade price was already 20% less than retail."

Buoyed by increasing sales in the early 1980s, Mocheck was rapidly outgrowing its premises. Then Ian and Tony spotted a shop down the road for sale that was four times the size. "Most motorcycle shops back then were pretty small, but this was a whopper." It was available to rent, so they moved in.

GREAT BRIDG
STAFFORDSH

Ian's business partner Tony Ackner sits astride a Dresda GL1000. Mocheck also worked with Van Veen, Bimota and Panther De Ville

STAN WOODS
MOCHECK RACING WITH T HERRON
4
DUNLOP
FERODO
CHAMPION
Shell

ABOVE Tom Herron on the Mocheck Honda TTF1 in 1978 at Dundrod. Like all Mocheck's star riders, Tom rode for appearance and prize money only – Mocheck never paid any of their racers

And then came the beginning of the end, although they didn't know it at the time: they started borrowing a lot of money. "The landlord decided to sell our shop and the offices above as a job lot," says Ian. "We didn't have that sort of money but it didn't sell – probably because buyers weren't keen on having a motorcycle shop as their tenant.

"We asked what he'd take and I think it was around £120,000, which at the time was a lot of money. We saw the bank manager, he agreed the loan, and we bought it. Then we spent more money kitting it out properly with new windows, floors, lighting and central heating."

And – crucially – they created a big clothing department. "Fieldsheer, Frank Thomas, Furygan, Rukka… we stocked them all. We had kit for all the dispatch riders who came in for brake levers, luggage racks and what have you. And we had kit for Sunday riders too – people came from all over England because there was nowhere else with the range we stocked.

"Then the shop next door came up for sale, and we bought that too, though by then prices had trebled so this was probably £300,000. By then the shop was very big – we had 30 or so people working there. We didn't realise it at the time, but we were probably the first bike superstore.

LEFT Ian (right) and mechanic John Ryan talk 400/4 tactics at Silverstone in 1975

"Then a neighbouring shop came up for sale and we bought that too, with more borrowed money. That meant that above the shop we now had loads of offices, which we started converting into 24 flats. We borrowed money to do that – a lot of money – but when we sold them, we would be fine."

The problem was that they never got to sell them. "As the recession hit in the late 1980s interest rates kept going up [from 7.4% in 1988 to 13.4% in 1991] until eventually we couldn't afford the repayments. We went bust in 1991. It was a shame."

Afterwards, Ian made a living through grey imports until Honda stamped that out, and then set up a business selling champagne (which he continues to run). We've almost finished our coffee and it occurs to me that Ian hasn't mentioned one of the dealership's most curious dalliances: Hesketh. For a brief period in 1986 Mocheck built them.

"Ah yes, I went through it all from its birth at Easton Neston. We were invited along with some other dealers and rode the bike [in 1981], and then they gave us a questionnaire. It was multiple choice, so I said to the nice young lady that I need far more words because this bike is so shit. It was all wrong.

"Bubbles [Anthony Horsley, Hesketh's co-founder] later told me that for a little more money they could have got Cosworth to do the engine, but they went to Weslake instead. The gearbox would have been more suited to a lorry – it was designed by someone who should have thought mm but worked in inches instead. We were used to Japanese gearboxes, but each gear on a Hesketh could power a 3-litre Transit. We tried to help them out [assembling bikes in 1986] because we liked the people, but it was pure madness.

"We need another lunch to cover that one…" CB

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1961 Velocette Venom

Velo's single was a record-breaker and beautifully made, but also pricey. Could a dip in values tempt Rick into finally living the dream?

Words **RICK PARKINGTON** Photography **GARY MARGERUM**

Hard to know what's cooler: the fishtail exhaust pipe or slotted rear shock mount…

Funny, isn't it? You fall for a bike in your youth but, like that girl with a wistful smile on the school bus, for whatever reason it's a dream that never comes true. I first developed a bit of a thing about Velocettes in my late teens and thumping along on this 1961 Venom I'm feeling a real pang of regret that I didn't ever make it happen.

Actually, 'thump' is the wrong word. It may be a big four-stroke single, but a Velocette doesn't thump; it's more like a pulse. These are not just petulant bursts of expanding gas – each muted boom is like a heartbeat, sending a surge of energy through the drivetrain to the rear wheel. It makes a conventional single feel like a shotgun blast repeatedly spinning a weathervane on its axis. Okay, maybe I'm getting carried away, but I'm excited at the reaction this bike provokes in me after all these years. My Dad tried to put me off – he'd been underwhelmed by a weary 350cc MAC in his youth – but as I slice along on this gleaming black-and-gold Venom I can see I should have stuck to my guns.

Velocette went out of their way to make refined motorcycles but even so I can tell this is a particularly nice one. They typically attracted owners who liked a traditional single with solid performance that would cover high mileages and were prepared to maintain it to do so reliably. The test bike has covered just over 90,000 miles but you'd never guess from how it rides.

A family business in Hall Green, Birmingham, Velocette knew their market and catered for it – that's why they are often described as 'an engineer's bike' (not to be confused with 'would suit mechanic'...). There are some very sound – if unconventional – engineering ideas here, brave attempts to solve motorcycle design problems of their time that have led to successive generations of devotees. Out on sun-drenched roads on the Venom, it handles very well despite some curious ideas. Suspension preload is altered by shifting the top of the shock through a radius via a curved-slot mounting that takes it further off vertical. The rear fork is in two halves, joined together at the spindle and so asking for flex, yet somehow not getting any. There's an antiquated brazed lug frame, closely related to its rigid predecessor, and the front forks are relatively spindly – but somehow all this comes together to make a bike that corners with enviable stability.

Despite being fairly light and low the Venom is not a 'flickable' bike. You lean into your selected line and can trust it to stay there, but if you change your mind can just pick it up a bit and try again. Getting a bit enthusiastic I find it isn't the footrest or the toe of my boot that touches the ground, it's the sole. I must be overhanging the end of the 'peg, however it's somehow comfortingly Velocette to find the first limit to cornering is my foot smoothly skimming the road like a speedway rider's steel shoe.

And if you are to find yourself in difficulties, the brakes – on this bike at least – are excellent. The front is a non-standard, Thruxton Venom-type, full-width twin leading shoe and I'd rate it as good as any drum I've known – and better than many 1970s discs. The standard rear single leader is also impressive, and while I never claim to know much about the intricacies of suspension I can say both ends seem to work well and suit the bike perfectly.

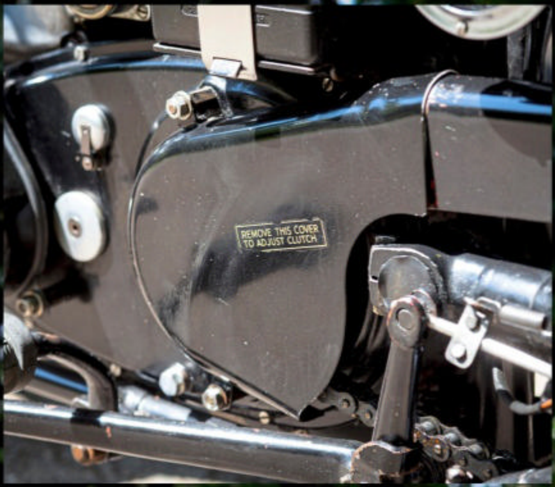
Starting the 499cc single I find a bit hit and miss, but that's my fault. One of Velocette's peculiarities

FAR RIGHT This bike's Thruxton-style TLS drum tests arm muscles

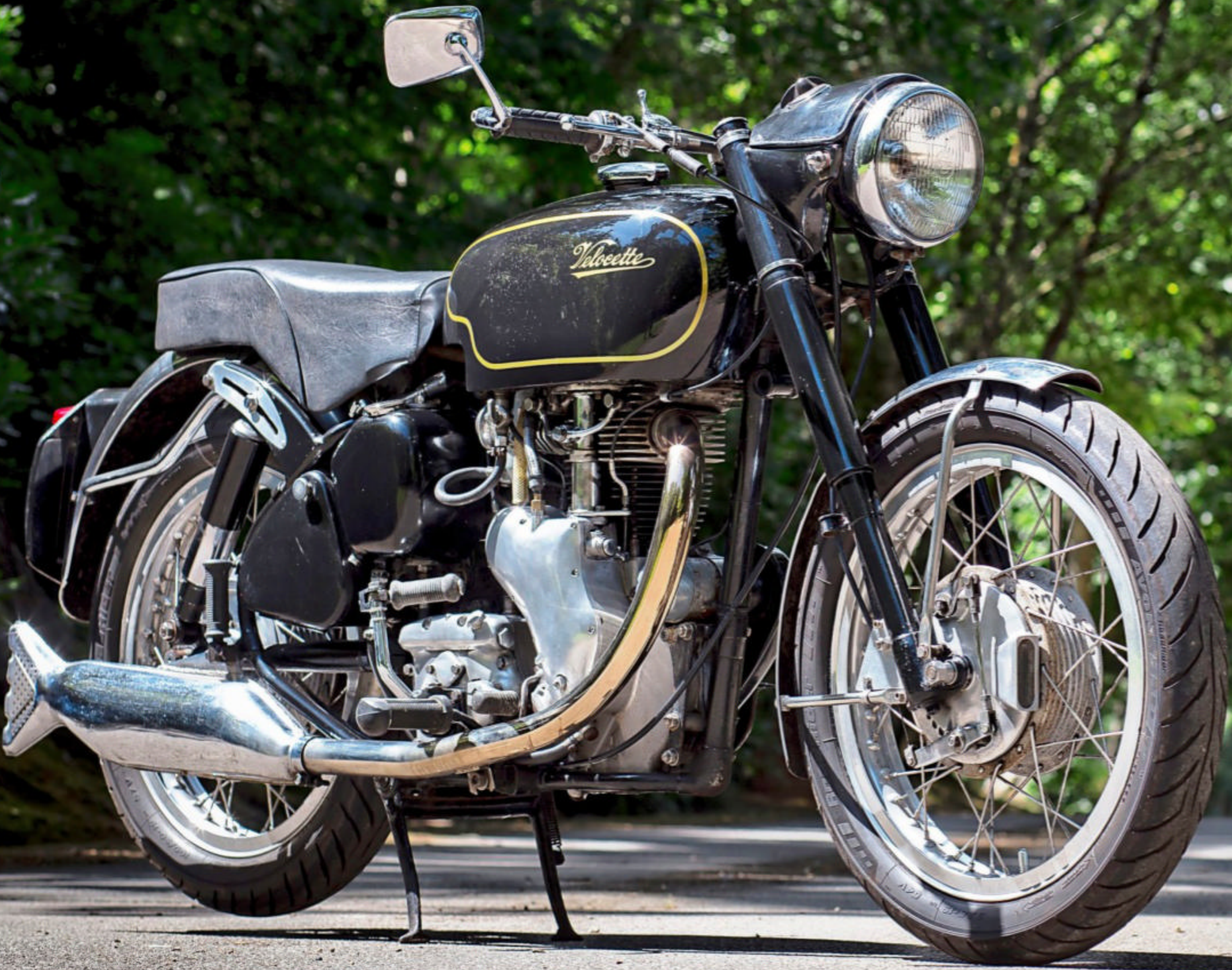
RIGHT In typically unusual Velo style, the clutch lives inboard of the drive sprocket

LEFT Handling can cause repeated visits to the local cobbler for resoles

RIGHT Showing 90,000 miles and ready to deliver the same again


REMOVE THIS COVER TO ADJUST CLUTCH

‘It’s a cut above the rest; if James Bond rode a performance single, it would be a Venom’



A swift look at Velo's timeline

1913 After a few pioneer-era four-strokes, cycle maker Veloce create a lightweight two-stroke, the 'Velocette'. The model becomes so successful that the name sticks ever after.

1924 With OHC engines beginning to succeed in record breaking, Velocette skirt traditional side/overhead valvers returning to four-strokes with the 350cc OHC Model K.

1933 Seeking a model between their 250 stroker and complex OHC 350, a pushrod four-stroke 250, the MOV, is introduced. Soon followed by a 350cc version called the MAC.

1936 The 350cc OHC K models are still in production, but their dominance is now challenged by a new 500cc version of the pushrod engine, known as the MSS.

1948 In difficult post war years, the range is pruned back to the MAC 350 as Velocette change direction, entering full scale production of the LE: a shaft drive, 150cc flat twin 'everyman' commuter (see page 13).

1954 With sales of the lightweight LE disappointing, the MSS reappears, restyled along MAC lines in a spring frame with its long-stroke 81 x 96mm engine redesigned to 'square' 86 x 86mm dimension.

1956 A sports 500cc model is introduced, fitted with chrome tank and mudguards and a headlamp nacelle. Named Venom, it is accompanied by a 350cc Viper version. In 1961, a faired Venom becomes the first bike to average 100mph for 24 hours at Monthéry in France (this record still stands for a single-cylinder bike).

1965 Success in the 1964 Thruxton 500 and dealer demand leads to the Venom Thruxton, an over-the-counter racer/fast road bike with tuned engine, larger tank, twin leading shoe brake and race carb. In 1967 Venoms are first and second in the Production 500cc TT. Below is John Barrow on a Thruxton, at Thruxton, in 1968.

1971 Having struggled to recover from costly efforts to capture the commuter market with the LE and Viceroy scooter, Velocette go into voluntary liquidation and close in February.

is an unusually low kickstart ratio which makes the pedal easier to move but at the expense of turning the engine slower and less far round.

This means you can do a full swing without ever reaching the compression firing point. So, there is a starting drill: find compression, pull the valve lifter and ease the piston just over TDC as on a normal single, but then carry on to the bottom of the swing. That way you're far enough round to meet the next compression halfway through your next swing. I know this… but don't always get it right. It's just technique – seller Anthony Godin manages fine and also tells me he's fitted electronic ignition, and certainly the bike runs perfectly. Unfortunately, he also reminds me how easy it is to 'chip your ankle' on a Velo and I think that makes me slightly hesitant; given a bit more practice I'd get it. The single's four gears are nicely spaced: Velocette offered options on close and wider ratios, and the sporty Venom is at the closer end. The clutch is also pleasantly light and smooth.

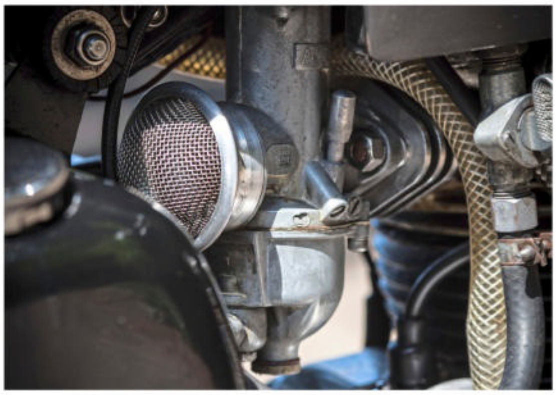
Ah, yes, the clutch. Talk Velocette and it will soon crop up. The firm dodged established British practice by fitting the clutch inboard of the gearbox sprocket. Bottom end rigidity is essential for reliability and Velocette achieved it with short shafts and narrow flywheel. That led to a crankcase that was narrower than the rear wheel so, given that the drive chain line is dictated by the width of the rear wheel and the primary chain's by the width of the crankcase, it makes sense to select whichever lines up best.

The problem with this is that the gearbox sprocket obstructs access for clutch adjustment. Velocette's solution was a hole drilled through the sprocket. By inserting a peg through the hole to engage with a

RIGHT Rick caught drifting away in a 'what could have been' moment

BELOW The sound of a single, but the Venom's feel is more 'pulse' than traditional 'thump'

> 'Attention to detail sought not just to provide performance but to wrap it in a refined package'



LEFT Motor has short pushrods, Amal Concentric, and gives 36bhp

LEFT In fine fettle but showing hints of its long life – just the ticket

castellated adjuster behind, spring tension is altered simply by turning the rear wheel. Clever.

However, there's a method involved that means regardless of your years of experience, you need to just follow the manual; your significant other will probably see the problem there even if you don't. Wrongly adjusted, a Velo clutch can cleverly combine both slip and drag. And adjustment isn't the only problem: as power increased so did the number of plates, and while the associated parts all look very similar, slight dimensional changes can lead to mismatch havoc.

From the inception of their OHV engine, a high camshaft design was used. Placing the cam relatively high in relation to the crankshaft enables the use of short pushrods, which better resist the flex that reduces valve lift at high revs. Timing gears had fine pitch helical teeth for quietness and greater timing accuracy. Never mind 'engineer's bike' – the Venom feels like it was built by and for people who understood what motorcycles are about. They were put together with an attention to detail that sought not just to provide performance but to wrap it in a refined package.

This is particularly obvious when the Venom is compared to its most obvious rival, the BSA Gold Star. The Goldie was faster, flashier and an awful lot noisier but the Venom – even in its highest performance Thruxton form – is fundamentally 'the gent'. A better all-rounder,

ABOVE Fancy a bit of this? Now's a grand time to buy yourself a Venom

SPECIFICATION | VELOCETTE VENOM

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION **Type** Four-stroke pushrod ohv single cylinder **Dimensions** 86 x 86mm **Capacity** 499cc **Power** 36bhp @ 6200 rpm **Comp ratio** 8:1 **Carburation** Amal Concentric 930 **Clutch** Wet multiplate **Gearbox** Four speed CHASSIS **Frame** Brazed lug single downtube cradle **Front suspension** Velocette hydraulically damped telescopic fork **Rear suspension** Swingarm with twin shock absorbers **Brakes** Front 7.5″/190mm full width, twin leading shoe drum Rear: 7″/177 mm full width, single leading shoe drum **Wheels** Spoked with flanged aluminium alloy rims **Tyres** Front 3.25 x 19, rear 3.50 x 19 DIMENSIONS **Wheelbase** 1365mm (53.75″) **Weight** 170kg (375 lbs) PERFORMANCE **Top speed** 105mph

less exhausting, somehow more calmly capable. This class divide is even evident in the workshop manual. BSA service sheets explain how to test your dynamo with a torch battery and bicycle bulb; Velocette's manual supplies dimensioned drawings for machining up your own pullers. Clearly it's a cut above the rest; if James Bond rode a performance single, it would be a Venom.

There are drawbacks, of course. The pressed tin primary chaincase is a pre-war piece of nonsense with a bad attitude to containing oil, the belt-driven dynamo can be awkward, and the engine casing screws are needlessly titchy. And those manual drawings are supplied because you'll surely need them sooner or later; the delicious Venom isn't a bike you fix in your yard with Mole grips and a screwdriver. I could recount a long and painful story about replacing a holed piston on a friend's Venom and trying to clear the lubrication system of aluminium grit without access to an oil pump reassembly jig…

Thinking about it, that incident was what put me off Hall Green's finest and sent me scuttling back to my earthy BSA. That, and also the price. Velos were always expensive. Very nice bike but… well, 'but' indeed. One of the reasons this Venom takes my fancy now is that Velocette prices have taken a tumble lately and while it's easy to resist something you can't afford, when prices drop it opens the market to new buyers. I have recently seen Venoms for 'recommissioning' go for under £4000 – that's pretty tempting, especially given there are many upgrades available to push them into the 21st century. This particular Venom is priced higher at £7995 – but having experienced what if offers I can see why. It's a bike you could just get on and ride. It also has matching numbers, original registration and a long history file, and not long ago would have been more like £12,000. It's important to remember that even when the economy falters there is still a pricing structure that reflects the quality of what's on offer.

Would I buy a Venom? Not now – I've got too many other bikes that do the same job. But if you had to choose one classic that can cover all bases, and do so with class, I think you could do a lot worse.

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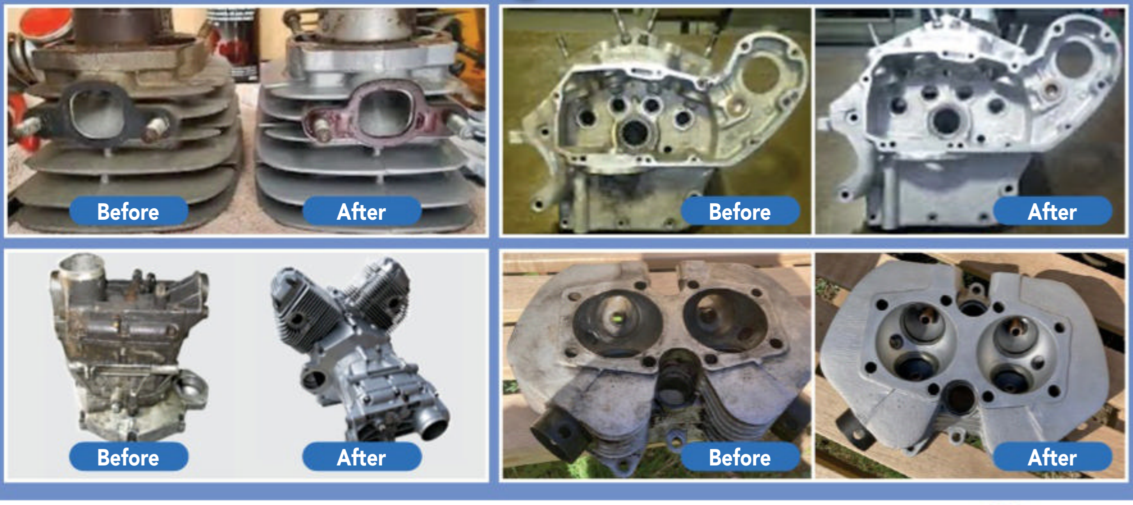

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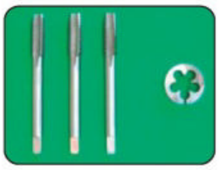

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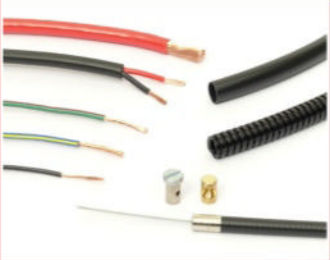

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Working class hero

Honda's CX500 became the despatch riders' go-to machine in the courier industry boom - and it can still deliver the goods today

Words **GEZ KANE** Photography **BAUER MEDIA GROUP**

The CX swarmed the streets of London in the '80s – usually bedecked with the logo of one of the myriad courier firms that connected businesses in that pre-digital age. And the qualities that made it the favourite for hundreds of despatch riders – reliability, all-day comfort, a decent turn of speed and long-term durability – are what can make it great everyday classic now.

An advanced machine at its launch in 1978, the CX500 featured liquid cooling, electronic ignition, tubeless tyres, shaft drive, CV carburettors and even a cassette-type gearbox. And there was method behind the seeming madness of a reversion to pushrod valve actuation. The cylinder heads of the compact 80° transverse V-twin are twisted round 22° to let the carbs to tuck in better, giving more room for the rider's knees but making chain drive to an overhead camshaft impossible. Short pushrods from the high-mounted chain-driven camshaft actuated the valves, their relative lack of mass allowing the engine to safely rev to 10,000rpm.

While the looks of the CX500 may divide opinion, the ride is something most will appreciate. The engine is smooth, with most of the torque reaction from the driveshaft being cancelled out by the contra-rotating clutch and gearbox, and there's a pleasantly off-beat exhaust note. The clutch and gearbox are excellent and the linear power delivery makes the most of the 48bhp. It's a surprisingly competent and comfortable machine for rapid long-distance hauls.

Living with a CX is pretty easy, too. Access for maintenance is excellent. With the rocker boxes removed, setting the valve clearances is a doddle and the oil filter sits right at the front of the engine. Adjusting the manual camchain tensioner on pre-E and GL twinshock models is straightforward, too. And, if you can find a well looked-after bike that's had a recent camchain, camshaft mechanical seal and alternator, routine servicing is all you'll need to do for a long time.

STUART COLLINS

THE BIG QUESTION

Is the camchain and tensioner OK?

Chas Holt, owner of Chas Bikes on Kennington Road in South London, has been working on CX500s since he started his business back in 1984. There's not much he doesn't know about them.

"The camchain tensioner is probably the major weakness of the CX500," he admits. "But it's nowhere near as bad as most people think. The very first model did have a problem, but that was sorted by a recall from Honda. Post-'79 bikes have an improved tensioner, so a camchain could last 80,000 miles. The tensioner needs adjusting manually on the twinshock models, though. Later E and GL500 models have an automatic camchain tensioner – the chains don't seem to last as long on these.

"Fitting a new camchain and tensioner isn't as big a job as people think, either. You do need to drop the engine out, but that's a fairly straightforward job. When I first started the business, I'd do a day on the road, working as a courier, and then head into the workshop at about 6pm. Between then and midnight, I could do three camchains."

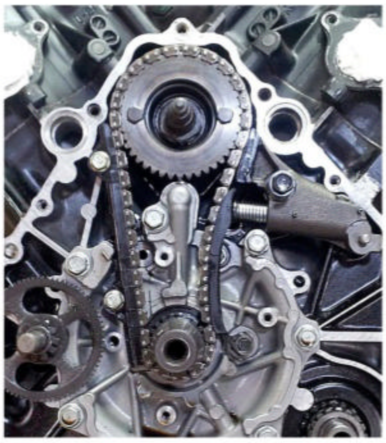


PHOTO: CX500 FORUM

What to look for

Engine

Check for coolant leaking down the rear of the engine. There's a weep hole to allow coolant to leak out rather than into the crankcases if the camshaft mechanical seal has failed. Replacement of a failed seal is easier with the engine out of the frame.

Alternator

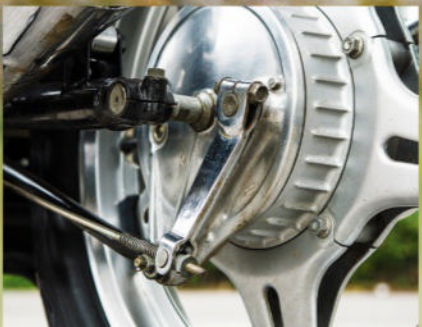
Make sure the charging system is in good order. The alternator is at the rear of the engine and it's an engine-out job to remove and replace it. The ignition source coils on Z, A and B models are prone to failure, too.

Camchain tensioner

Early CX500s were plagued by camchain tensioner issues. Almost all will have had this addressed by fitting a redesigned tensioner assembly under warranty years ago. Later (post-'79) models have the revised tensioner fitted from new.

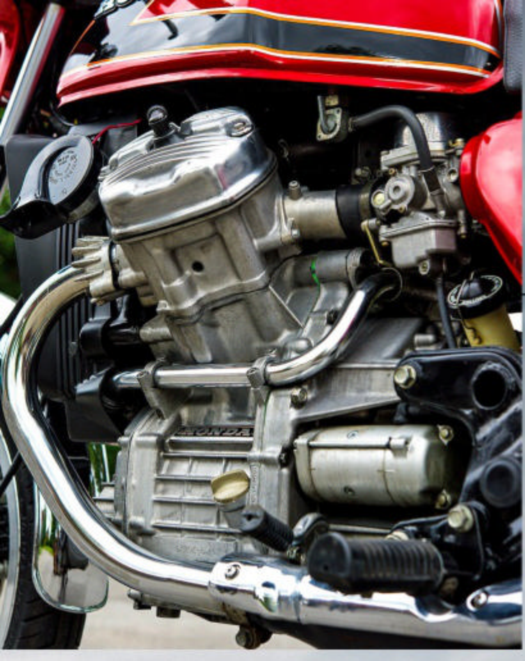
SPECIFICATION
1978 HONDA CX500Z

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION	
Type	Liquid-cooled ohv 80° V-twin
Dimensions	79 x 52mm
Capacity	497cc
Output (claimed)	48bhp at 9000rpm
Compression ratio	10:1
Carburation	2 x 35mm Keihin CV
Clutch	Wet multiplate
Gearbox	Five-speed
CHASSIS	
Frame	Tubular spine type
Front suspension	33mm telescopic forks
Rear suspension	Twinshock
Brakes	Front: 2 x 9.4in (240mm) discs Rear: 6.3in (160mm) sls drum
Wheels	Steel/alloy fabricated Comstar
Tyres	Front 3.25 x 19in Rear 3.75 x 18in
DIMENSIONS	
Wheelbase	1455mm (57.3in)
Weight (claimed)	200kg (441lb)
PERFORMANCE	
Top speed	104.77mph (*Motorcycling Monthly* road test)

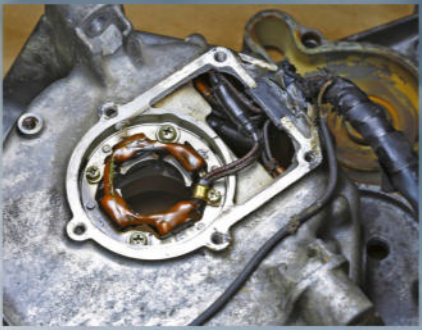


Swingarm

Examine this carefully for corrosion – they can literally rot through. Amazingly, reproduction swingarms are available from David Silver spares for £178.80.



Cylinder heads of the V-twin are twisted round 22° to let carbs tuck in better, improving knee room



CDI advancer unit mounts on the back of the substantial rear engine cover

Ignition

Failure of the original electronic ignition system is not uncommon on any bike that's over 40 years old. Check that the bike starts easily and pulls well throughout the rev range. Replacement aftermarket systems from Ignitech and Rae-San are available.

Brakes

Brakes are a mix and match, depending on which market bikes were originally supplied to. UK CX500 up to 1981 B models are equipped with twin 240mm front discs and single-piston calipers. Other markets got a single 276mm disc.

RESOURCES

David Silver Spares Ltd
Renowned UK Honda spares supplier offering both NOS and pattern parts for all CX500 variants.
davidsilverspares.co.uk

CX500 Forum
Lively international forum for CX owners with plenty of useful advice and information.
cx500forum.com

Marco Becker
Netherlands-based supplier of NOS, pattern and good used parts. Links to useful repair and maintenance videos.
marcobecker.nl

Ignitech
Replacement electronic ignition systems.
ignitech.cz

CMS
Netherlands-based supplier of NOS and pattent Honda parts with good stocks of CX goodies.
cmsnl.com

Rae-San
Australian manufacturer of complete replacement ignition systems.
rae-san.com

CX-GL MCC
Web-based UK owners club with useful forum.
cx-gl.org.uk

BELOW (LEFT TO RIGHT) Reliability means CXs can rack up big miles on the odo; it's all designed with practicality in mind, including the wind deflector; oil filter is right at the front of the engine, in keeping with the easy-access maintenance philosophy

MODEL HISTORY

1978 The CX500 is launched. UK versions of the liquid-cooled 80° transverse V-twin have twin front discs, though a single disc is fitted for some markets. Electronic ignition, fabricated Comstar wheels and shaft drive.

1979 CX500Z remains largely unchanged in the UK. In the US and a number of other markets, a CX500 Deluxe with a 16in rear wheel and conventional headlight brackets was introduced. CX500C Custom model launched in the USA with smaller fuel tank, high 'bars, revised seat and 'factory custom' styling.

1980 CX500A. Minor changes and a fly screen is fitted on top of the headlight housing. CX500C released in the UK.

1981 CX500B with reverse Comstar wheels (with black spokes) replaces the A model. GL500 Silver Wing launched as a more touring-oriented option. It's the last year of the twinshock CX500.

1982 CX500EC is introduced, with redesigned 18in Comstar wheels front and rear, Pro-Link rear suspension, uprated forks, cockpit fairing, new ignition system, rear disc brake and sportier styling to replace the original CX500. An all-new turbocharged model, the CX500T, is introduced (from late 1981 for the 1982 sales season).

1983 The remaining 500cc models are replaced by the new 674cc CX650 (above). The line-up includes a CX650ED, a GL650 and the turbo CX650T model.

Bikes like this 1978 CX500Z can be had for very affordable prices

STUART COLLINS

Which to buy, what to pay...

Despite being a landmark model for Honda – in terms of engineering innovation and sales – the CX500 has endured a longer than usual spell in the 'cheap old bike' category. More recently, it's also become one of the more popular donor bikes for new wave customs.

That has started to make the once-ubiquitous CX500 a scarce commodity in standard trim. As a result of that and the fact that people seem to have at last started to appreciate the CX, prices are starting to creep up. If you want one, now really is a good time to buy.

Leaving aside the exotic CX500 Turbo – though if you must have one, expect to pay £7500 upwards for the privilege – the 'original' CX500 is the most desirable variant. Given the initial problems with camchain tensioners (though almost all affected bikes will have been modified or scrapped by now), it makes sense to look for a 1981 CX500B model. And, as most CX500s that are still running will have been owner-maintained for some time, it will pay to seek out an enthusiast owner to buy from. There are a surprising number out there – check out the owners' forums **cx–gl.org.uk** and **cx500forum.com**. You should be able to find a tidy bike in good running order for £2500 or less, but a mint example could make up to £4000 – or even more for a low-mileage or one-owner machine.

'Eurosport' models cost less than twinshock bikes

Perhaps oddly, the CX500EC 'Eurosport' models, with their Pro-Link rear suspension, beefier 35mm forks, disc rear brake and sportier styling, don't seem to make as much as comparable twinshock bikes. Around £2500 should buy you a really nice one. And the factory custom CX500C can be had for even less. Relatively few were sold in the UK and the styling never seemed to resonate with British buyers – we saw a very clean example with around 40,000 miles on the clock, running and riding perfectly, sell at auction a few weeks back for just £1404. Project bikes can be had for anything from £500 upwards, but beware. As with many classics, restoration or recommissioning costs can spiral very easily.

If the idea of owning a practical, reliable and genuinely innovative classic without spending a fortune appeals, the CX500 is certainly worth consideration. Buy the right one and you'll get a characterful, reliable and durable machine that will still turn some heads.

Probably the perfect buy is a B model that's had what the CX community terms the 'triple bypass': replacement of the camchain tensioner, camshaft mechanical seal and alternator. It'll cost around £3000, and there'll be nothing to do but ride, service and enjoy... CB

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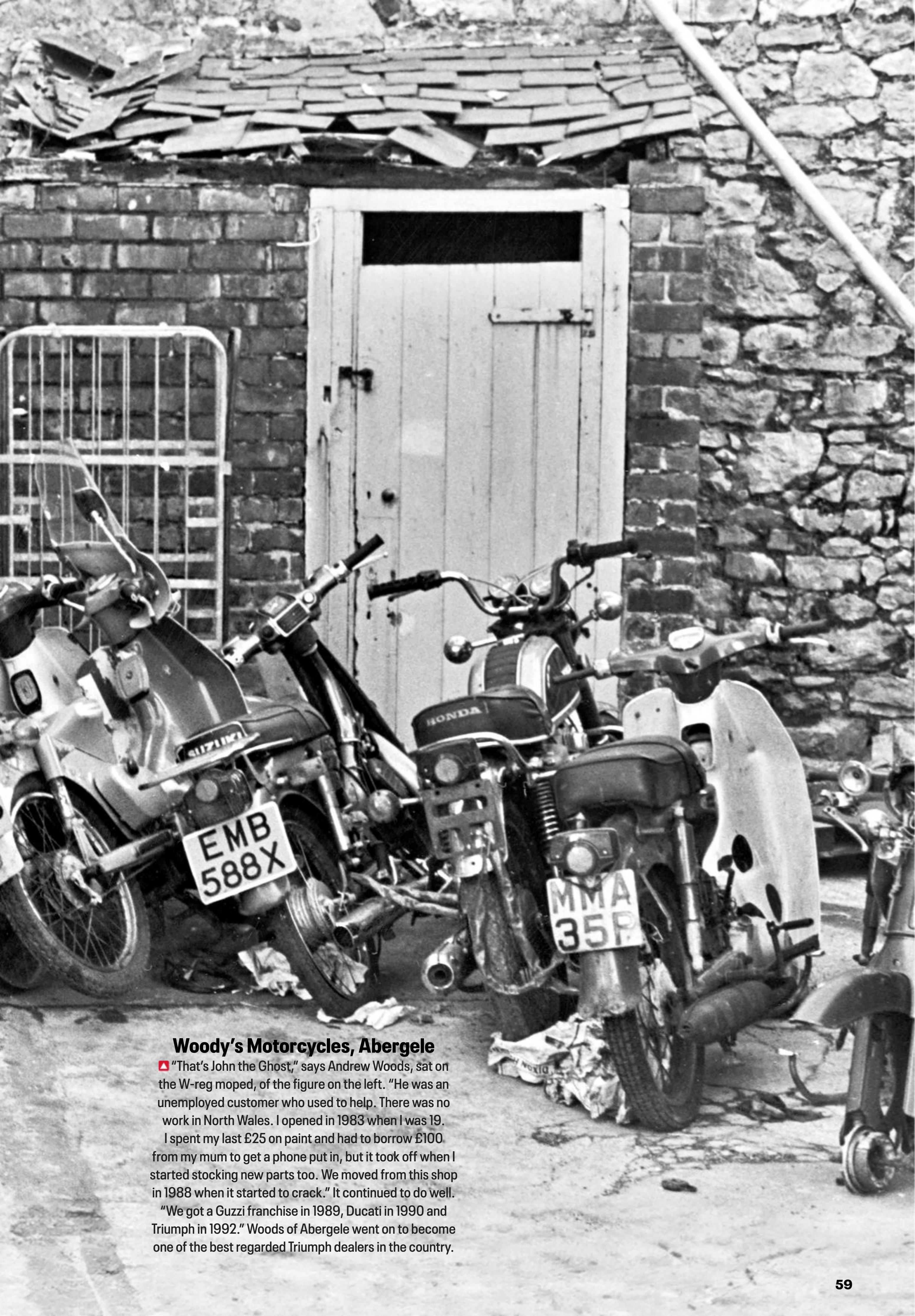
The Breakers

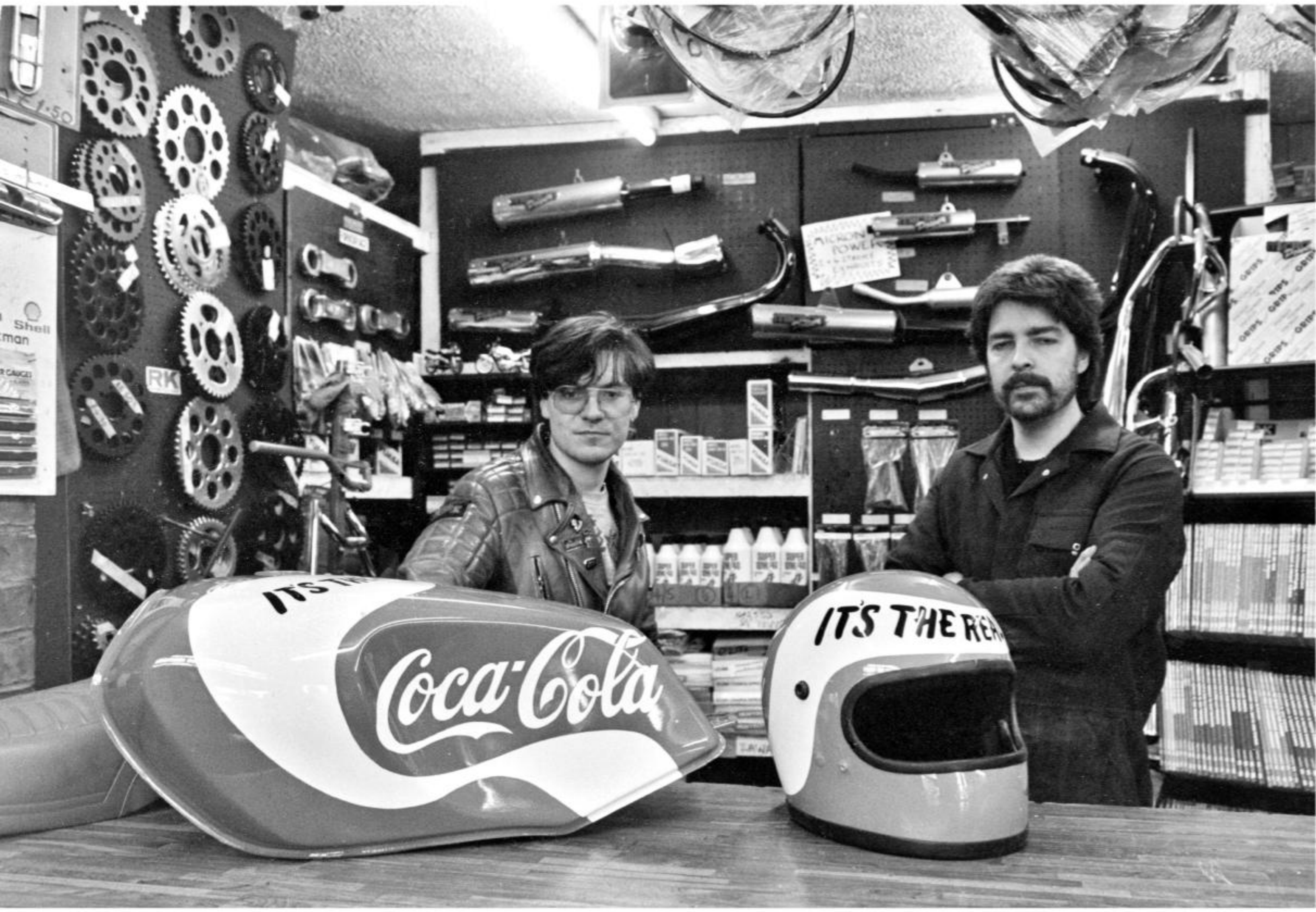
In the days before eBay we relied on grubby bike breakers for bits to keep our bikes alive. These photographs were used in *Performance Bikes* magazine in the mid-1980s, but where are these people now?

Captions **HUGO WILSON** Photography **BAUER MEDIA GROUP**



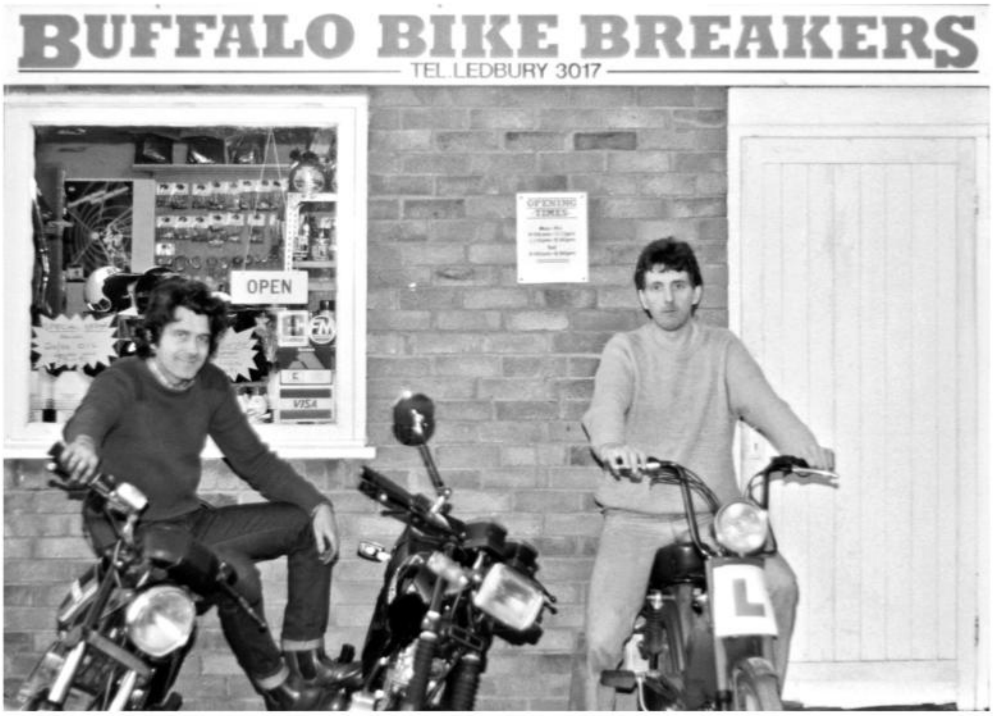
Woody's Motorcycles, Abergele

▲ "That's John the Ghost," says Andrew Woods, sat on the W-reg moped, of the figure on the left. "He was an unemployed customer who used to help. There was no work in North Wales. I opened in 1983 when I was 19. I spent my last £25 on paint and had to borrow £100 from my mum to get a phone put in, but it took off when I started stocking new parts too. We moved from this shop in 1988 when it started to crack." It continued to do well. "We got a Guzzi franchise in 1989, Ducati in 1990 and Triumph in 1992." Woods of Abergele went on to become one of the best regarded Triumph dealers in the country.



Mystery soft drink fans

A polished countertop and a neat display of sprockets, aftermarket exhausts and Haynes manuals – plus clean overalls – suggests a slicker operation than some other purveyors of used parts. But, unfortunately, we don't know who they are. The shift from secondhand parts to new spares saw many breakers move into the mainstream bike trade. Surely someone recognises the Yamaha LC tank with Coca Cola paint and matching lid? Write and tell us.



Buffalo, Ledbury

Apparently Buffalo Bike Breakers owed their name to the chorus of Malcolm Maclaren's Buffalo Girls single, which applied to boss man Andy Cale's overtaking technique of "going round the outside"; he was a Manx GP competitor who ran a Yamaha TZ750. Buffalo branched out into mail order accessories, exhausts, helmets and clothing, and had another sideline in seat re-covering. Local sources tell us that Andy is still involved in business at the same trading estate, but we couldn't track him down at time of going to press.

Kawasaki
HONDA
ABCD
GHIJ
MNOP
STUV
YZ12
5678

Recycled, Manchester

◀ Ronnie Smith, with 'tache and cap, lends a sympathetic shoulder for Recycled's boss Roy Bowsher. Their shop at 180-182 Bolton Road in Manchester was apparently guarded by an Alsation called Dogbreath who ensured minimal break-ins. Stock was stored in tea chests and Roy's fine policies included only serving smiling customers and refusing to sell frames with a logbook.

Adrian's, Aberystwyth

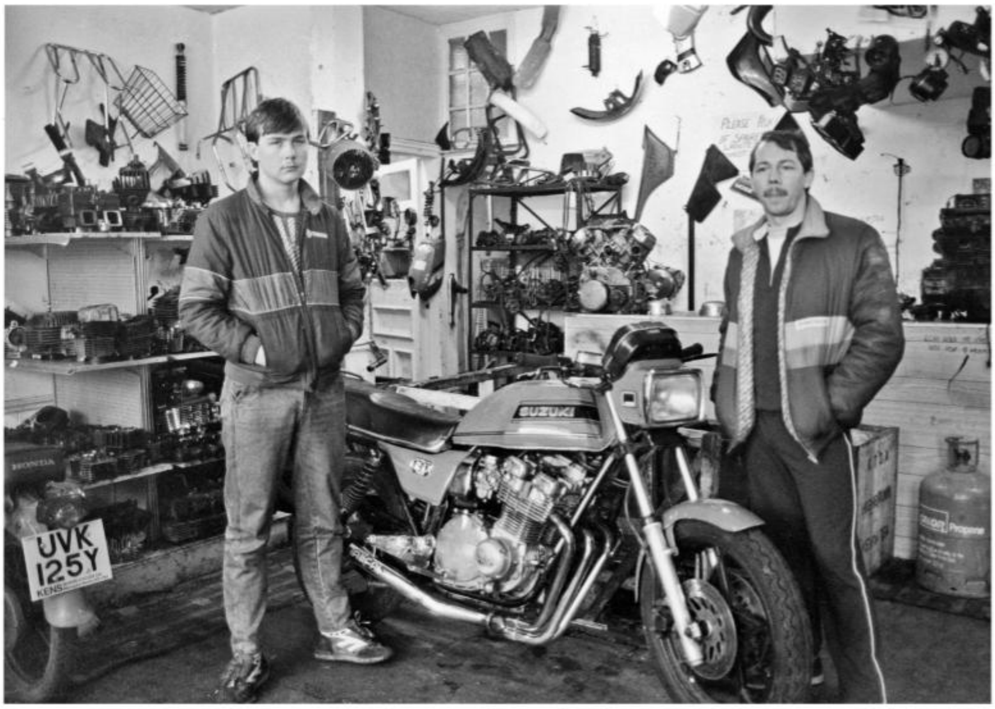
▼ Adrian looks pleased with the stash in his Morris Ital pick-up: Yam RD with re-shaped tank, Honda CB250RS, and a Yamaha off-roader. He's still in Aberystwyth: "It was a crazy time. We'd advertise a bike in *MCN* as 'Just in for breaking' and by lunchtime Wednesday had half a dozen calls from people wanting a frame with logbook." The business closed around 1992, but in 2016 Adrian took over Harglo Performance and supplies spares for MV Agusta, Aprilia, Guzzi and more. And the Ital? "Sold it to a farmer. It's still in his yard as far as I know."

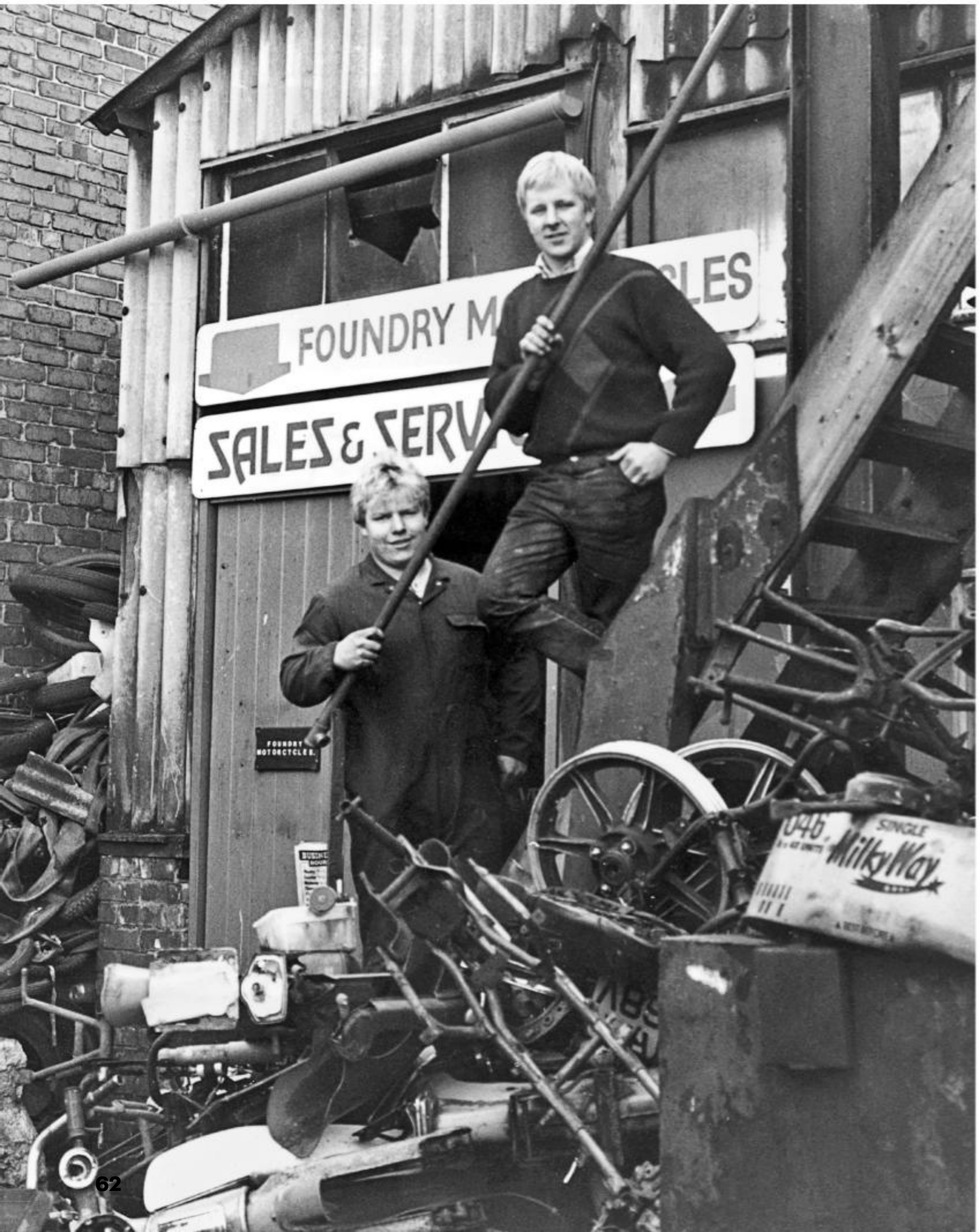
'We'd advertise a bike for breaking, and by lunchtime had half a dozen calls from people wanting a frame with logbook'

Adrian's Cycle Salvage
YAMAHA

Hunters, Newcastle

Westgate Hill in Newcastle-upon-Tyne was the North East's motorcycling mecca in the 1970s through to the 1990s. Hunters Motorcycles, run by Keith and Alan Hunter, just off the main road in Blandford Street, were in the heart of it. Almost 40 years after this picture was in *Performance Bikes*, they're still in business, though they have moved from Westgate Hill to a business park south of the Tyne in Gateshead, and are supplying new parts mainly through their website. Their phone number is still the same too, albeit with a different dialling code. huntermotorcycles.co.uk



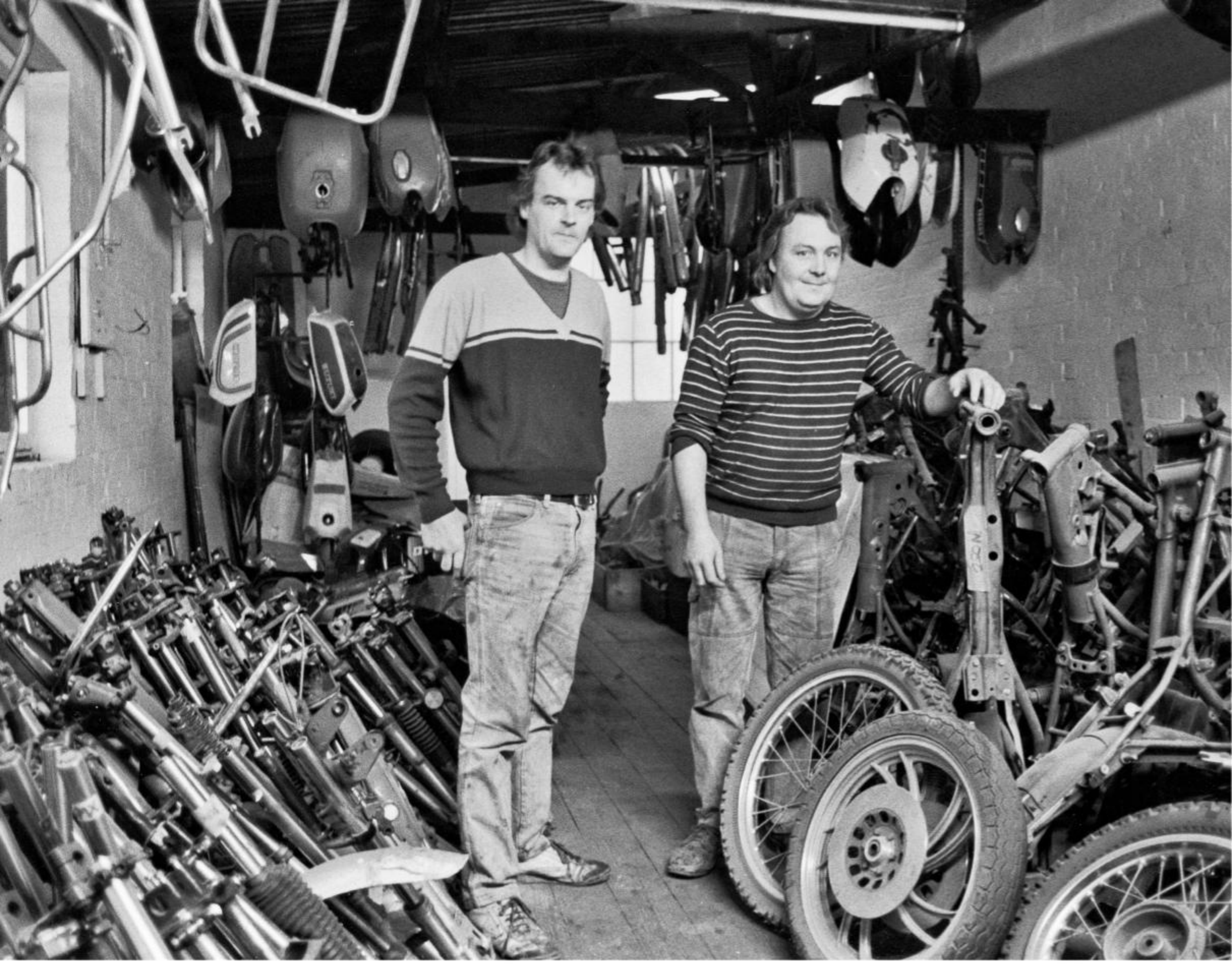


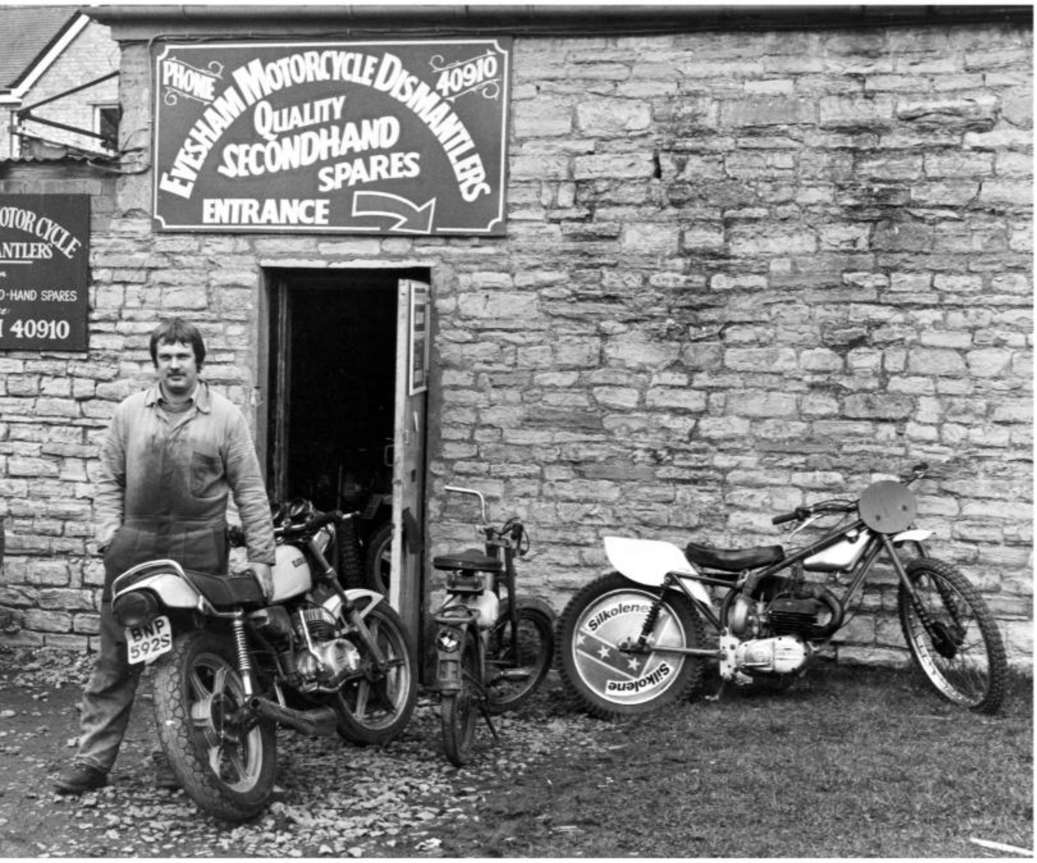
Foundry Motorcycles

You can almost smell the oil in this picture. We're not sure where Foundry Motorcycles were based, nor who the proprietors pictured on the staircase are. But we admire the creative guttering system on their asbestos shed, the sculptural quality of their yard and the Milky Way box. Maybe the stuff inside the building is more sympathetically organised. Maybe not. If you ever bought an RD200 engine or pair of forks for a 400/Four here, then please get in touch.

Evesham Motorcycle Dismatlers, Evesham

The bikes parked outside Evesham Motorcycle Dismantler's picturesque stone barn are a non-descript moped, a Bultaco-powered grasstrack racer and a nice Kawasaki KH250 with expansion chamber pipes and aftermarket cast wheels. The DVLA database tells us the Kawasaki was last taxed in 1983 which suggests that it is about to make a one-way journey through the door and into the barn. Hopefully some of its component parts made it back through the door and helped keep other Kawasaki triples on the road.

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OTOR CYCLE
ANTLERS
D-HAND SPARES
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BNP 592S
Silkolene
Silkolene

Midland Motorcycles, Leicester

▲ John Ellis and Nigel Stone pose amongst some of their stock at Fosse Road, Leicester in 1986. Like other breakers, lots of their parts were sold via the breaker's adverts that used to fill the back pages of *MCN* in the 1980s. 172 Fosse Road is now occupied by Cheetos Mini Market, offering 'groceries, soft drinks, sweets, snacks, food and much more', though we doubt that 'much more' includes a selection of fuel tanks, forks and front wheels.

Tell us more!

Did you use any of these breakers? Got fabulous stories about breakers to share? Please write to us: **letters@classicbike.co.uk**

Sorry, IT'S A WHAT...?

Looks like a familiar twin, but this is a **Dong Hai 750** – the Chinese-built parallel motor with more than a little British influence

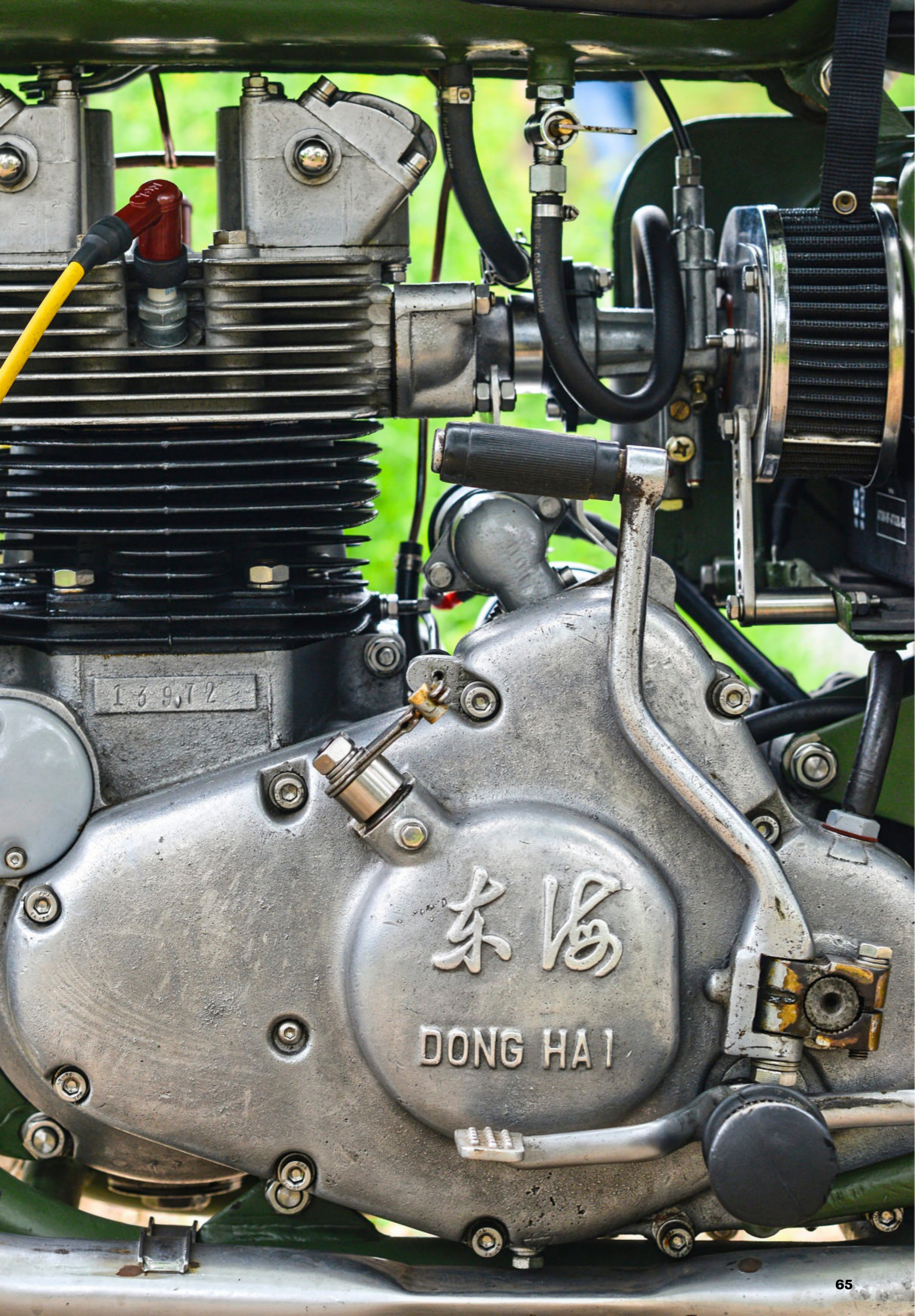
Words **MICK DUCKWORTH** Photography **GREG MOSS**

There are loads of Chinese-made motorcycles on our roads today, but for anyone with an eye for a classic, not much of interest. Unless you come across Peter Wright and his 1968 750cc Dong Hai on the lanes of rural Norfolk. Not interested in mainstream bikes – and having always enjoyed the challenge of making Eastern Bloc machines reliable – Peter took on a mammoth job when he swapped a Soviet 650cc Dnepr MT11 flat twin for this parallel twin from even further East with a fellow member of the Cossack OC.

"I got two and a half bikes partly dismantled and in a pretty rough state, knowing that spares aren't available," Peter says.

According to available information, the Dong Hai was manufactured from 1968 until 1985 at a factory in Shanghai. Made for the military and primarily for sidecar use, it has an ohv 745cc (78 x 78mm) engine in a heavyweight chassis and provided a modernised replacement for the 750cc BMW-copy side-valve flat twin used by the People's Liberation Army from the mid-1950s. (The Dong Hai didn't fully replace the archaic design; it survived for decades, being available in the UK as the Chang Jiang CJ750 until defeated by emissions rules 10 years ago.)

You won't see another outside the Slug & Lettuce


139,72
东海
DONG HAI

‘I got two and a half bikes in a pretty rough state, knowing spares aren’t available’

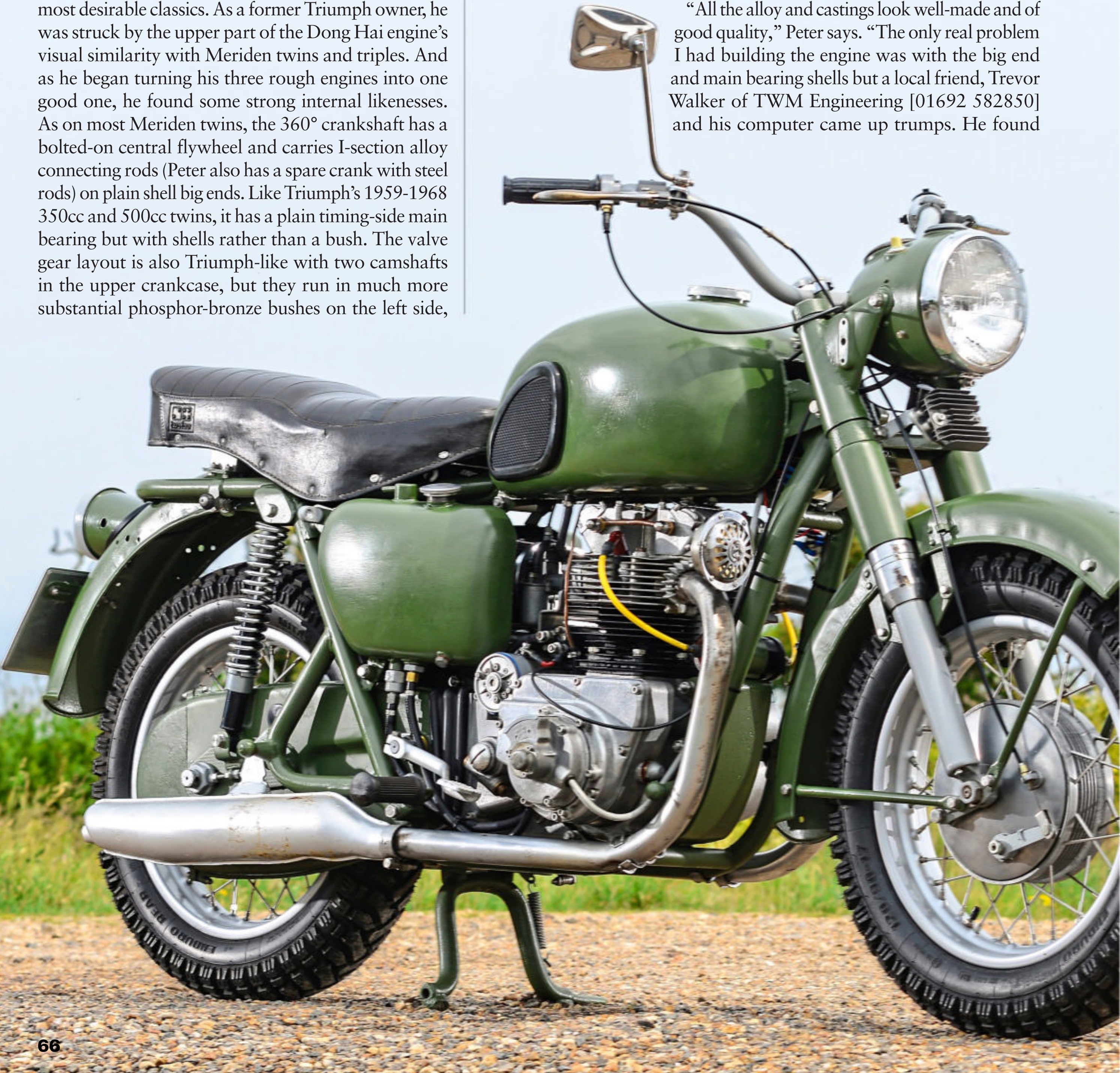
An estimated 20,000 Dong Hai vertical twins are thought to have been produced, many shipped to Albania and Vietnam. A few, probably fewer than 100, were imported as the SM750 model to Germany in the 1980s and sold in civilian colours, but Peter opted for a military olive green finish.

“It’s rare, but the wrong sort of rare,” he quips, acknowledging that this does not rank among the most desirable classics. As a former Triumph owner, he was struck by the upper part of the Dong Hai engine’s visual similarity with Meriden twins and triples. And as he began turning his three rough engines into one good one, he found some strong internal likenesses. As on most Meriden twins, the 360° crankshaft has a bolted-on central flywheel and carries I-section alloy connecting rods (Peter also has a spare crank with steel rods) on plain shell big ends. Like Triumph’s 1959-1968 350cc and 500cc twins, it has a plain timing-side main bearing but with shells rather than a bush. The valve gear layout is also Triumph-like with two camshafts in the upper crankcase, but they run in much more substantial phosphor-bronze bushes on the left side, where they are driven from the crankshaft by timing gears. The pushrods enclosed in tubes outside the cylinder barrel operate rockers with tappet adjusters accessed by removing cover plates. While similar in appearance to a Triumph item, the cylinder head is held down by eight bolts, where a Meriden 750 has ten.

The dry sump lubrication system’s twin-plunger oil pump, driven off the inlet camshaft, mimics that used by Ariel from 1929 and Triumph until 1985. Noting different top-end oiling systems on his engines, Peter chose a direct feed to the rocker boxes from the timing chest rather than the usual British method of a branch off the return line to the tank. He didn’t fit oil pressure and warning light switches found among the parts.

The Shanghai factory clearly studied Triumph design, not surprising since the brand was a world leader in the late 1960s and Britain had strong trading links with Shanghai prior to the 1967 Cultural Revolution.

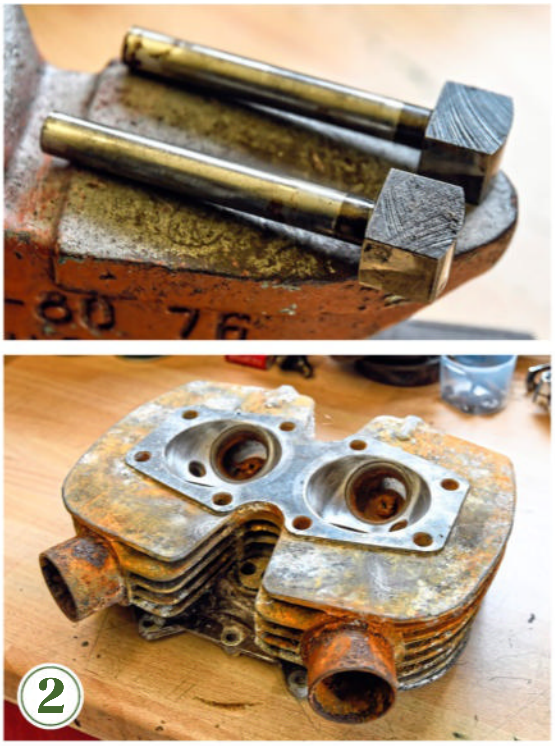
“All the alloy and castings look well-made and of good quality,” Peter says. “The only real problem I had building the engine was with the big end and main bearing shells but a local friend, Trevor Walker of TWM Engineering [01692 582850] and his computer came up trumps. He found



BELOW Top end looks Triumph-like, but lower engine lacks Meriden curves. Dong Hai were fond of a knobbly tyre

COSSACK
OWNERS CLUB

1



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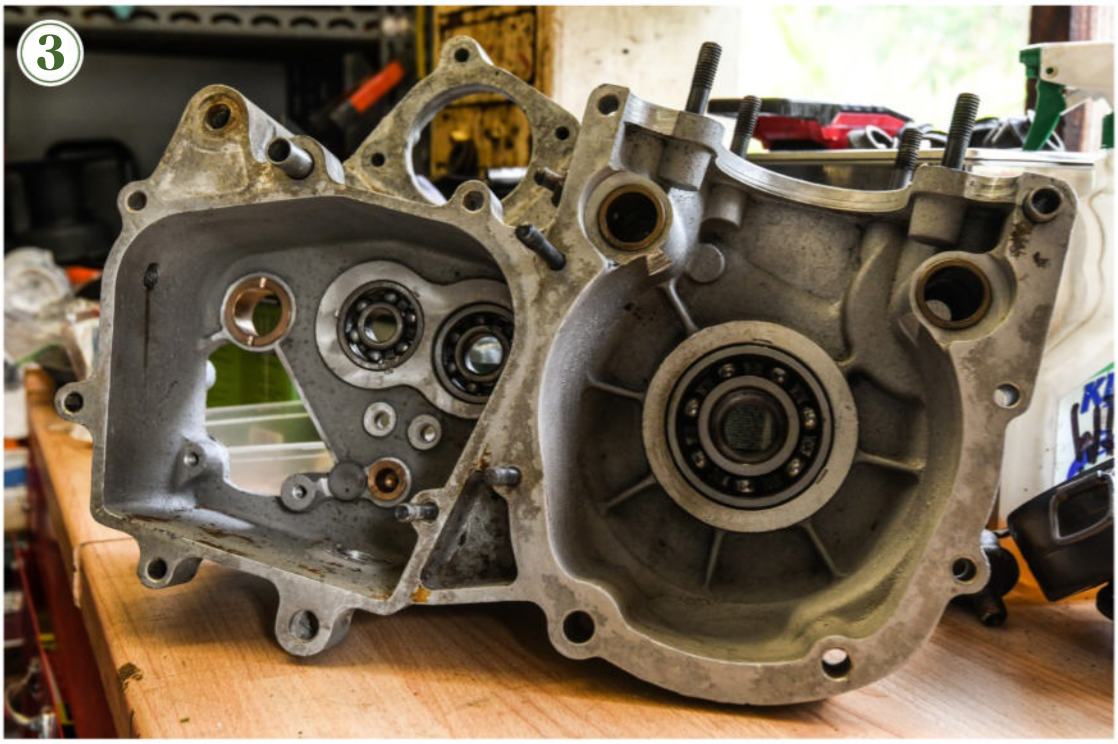

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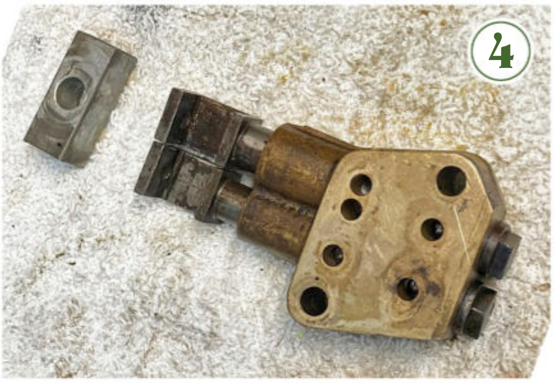

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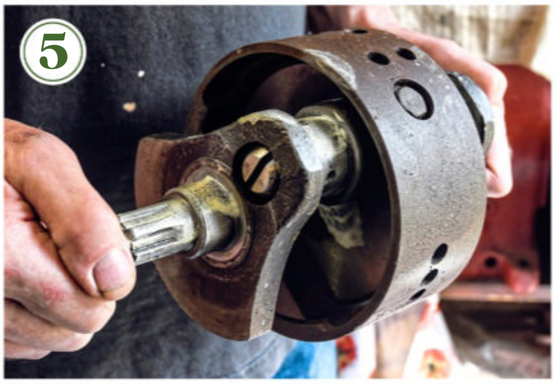
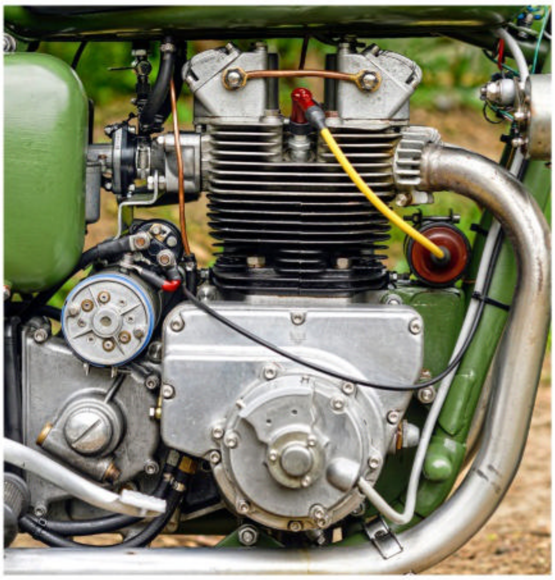


5

ABOVE 1) Heavy engineering? Oh yes – Peter can barely lift the weight of the spare BSA-ish tubular steel frame. 2) Not hard to spot the influence of British bike manufacturers in parts such as the Triumph-alike cylinder head and cam followers. 3) The left-hand crankcase also houses much of the Dong Hai's four-speed gearbox. 4) This style of twin plunger oil pump can be traced right back to the 1920s – it was used by Ariel from 1929 then deployed by Triumph right up until the mid-1980s. 5) More influence from the midlands here, the crankshaft's bolt-on flywheel being typical of British machines.

东海



ABOVE Alternator lives inside the timing-side engine casing

Cossack
KFE

ABOVE Sino-Russian accord at the rear of Peter's imposing twin

SPECIFICATION | 1968 DONG HAI 750

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION **Type** air-cooled ohv 4v parallel twin **Capacity** 745cc **Bore x stroke** 78 x 78mm **Compression ratio** 7:1 **Carburation** 26mm Dnepr K-302 (substitute) **Ignition** battery and coil **Clutch** wet, multi-plate **Gearbox** four-speed **CHASSIS** **Frame** tubular, duplex cradle **Front suspension** telescopic hydraulic forks **Rear suspension** swingarm, twin shocks **Brakes** drums front and rear **Wheels** spoked, steel rims **Tyres** 120/90 x 17in F&R **DIMENSIONS** **Wheelbase** 56in (1430mm) **Seat height** 880mm (34.6in) **Kerb weight** 569lb (258kg) **PERFORMANCE** **Top speed** 85mph (est)

that Renault 8 car main bearing shells would match reground journals." Having only a carburettor with a broken body in his cache of parts, Peter substituted a similar Russian K302 type, fitting a K&N air filter.

Apart from the crankshaft, the lower part of the engine owes more to European than British tradition and certainly lacks the curvy looks of classic Triumph castings. Primary drive is by straight-cut gears and the teeth on the clutch outer drum take drive from the starter motor. The primary casing shares oil with the four-speed gearbox, which has a drum-type selector mechanism operated from a heel-and-toe pedal. A kick-starter is on the left side of the box.

Charging for the 12V battery is by an alternator mounted in the timing cover (as on a Triumph Trident), with a peg drive off the end of the crankshaft that allows it to be easily removed. The ignition points are under a cover at the leftward end of the exhaust camshaft and a double-ended coil is mounted ahead of the cylinder block.

Looking more BSA than Triumph at a glance, the duplex frame is extremely weighty with large-diameter tubing, some slightly oval-section, and has a similarly sturdy swingarm. The rear shocks, taken from Peter's spares store, have bare springs where the original Girling lookalikes were fully shrouded. Heavily mudguarded 17in wheels are shod with wide, deeply treaded Mitas tyres. The drum brakes look weatherproof and there is a crossover rod and cable arrangement to operate the rear brake from the left pedal. A pressed steel cover encloses the final drive chain, with a flexible bellows joint where it meets the rear of the gearbox. Useful fuel range is promised by the capacious and shapely 25-litre (5.5 UK gallon) tank, which needed some holes filled before painting.

Short of a seat, Peter found one made by aftermarket brand Two Four at an autojumble and made it fit; a Cossack logo at the rear doesn't bother him. To use original silencers, silver heat-proof paint was applied to damaged surfaces unsuitable for plating. There is a similar matt finish on the raised and swept-back handlebars, which carry a switch unit including a neat click-ring headlight dipper inboard of the left grip. Lacking a battery cover side panel, Peter used a pressing from a 175cc CZ that doesn't look out of place. Finding the original massive rectangular rear light ugly, he replaced it with a neater Chiang Jiang unit and fitted a rear-view mirror.

The Cossack OC, of which Peter has been a member for 30 years, obtained an age-related registration from the DVLA to get him road legal. When the completed machine was first started, smoke started issuing from under the fuel tank. Concluding that it wasn't from leaking oil, Peter decided there was a problem with the regulator/rectifier unit. A maintenance technician for a leading potato brand with no fear of electrical systems, he obtained a Yamaha XS650 unit as he knew the alternator was of a similar type to the Dong Hai's. He mounted it under the headlamp with its heat sink in the air stream.

Once on the road, Peter has encountered some minor glitches with carburation and ignition, but he has always relished a technical challenge with unorthodox machinery. CB

What's it feel like?

Hugo Wilson takes the Chinese 750 for a trundle

First impressions? It's heavy. And it's tall. Heaving the Dong Hai off its centrestand is a nervously precarious exercise. The ignition key is under the headstock, and without the electric starter connected it needs to be kick-started; for me, on a bike with a left hand kick-start, that means standing alongside the bike and using my right leg. Fortunately, the low-compression engine turns over easily and fires straight away. The exhaust note has the even pulses of a 360° crankshaft and is well muffled.

Astride the bike I'm on tiptoes, but the wide bars and spacious stance make it easy to ride. The rocking heel and toe shift pedal for the four-speed gearbox is on the left, with an unusual neutral below first, heel-for-down-toe-for-up pattern that I never get used to on this brief ride.

The low-speed manoeuvrability is good - partly helped by those wide bars and the low gearing - and while you can feel vibration at low revs it is never really intrusive and actually seems to reduce as engine revs rise.

The combination of a small carburettor and heavy flywheels ensure that speed builds slowly, and progress is sedate. The speedo wasn't working, but it feels like not much more than 30bhp, and 50-55mph cruising. On these Norfolk lanes - and in deference to an engine that'd only done 50 miles since a rebuild - that felt fine.

Once you are up to speed, the handling is a bit vague - maybe it's those chunky tyres, the forks are a bit clunky, and you need to use both brakes to slow the substantial mass of the machine.

Now, to get it back onto the centrestand. Er... can you give me a hand?

3 ISSUES

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ISLE OF MAN TT special
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Inside the IoM sheds
Oddest ever TT race bikes
Joey
The story of Dunlop's greatest race
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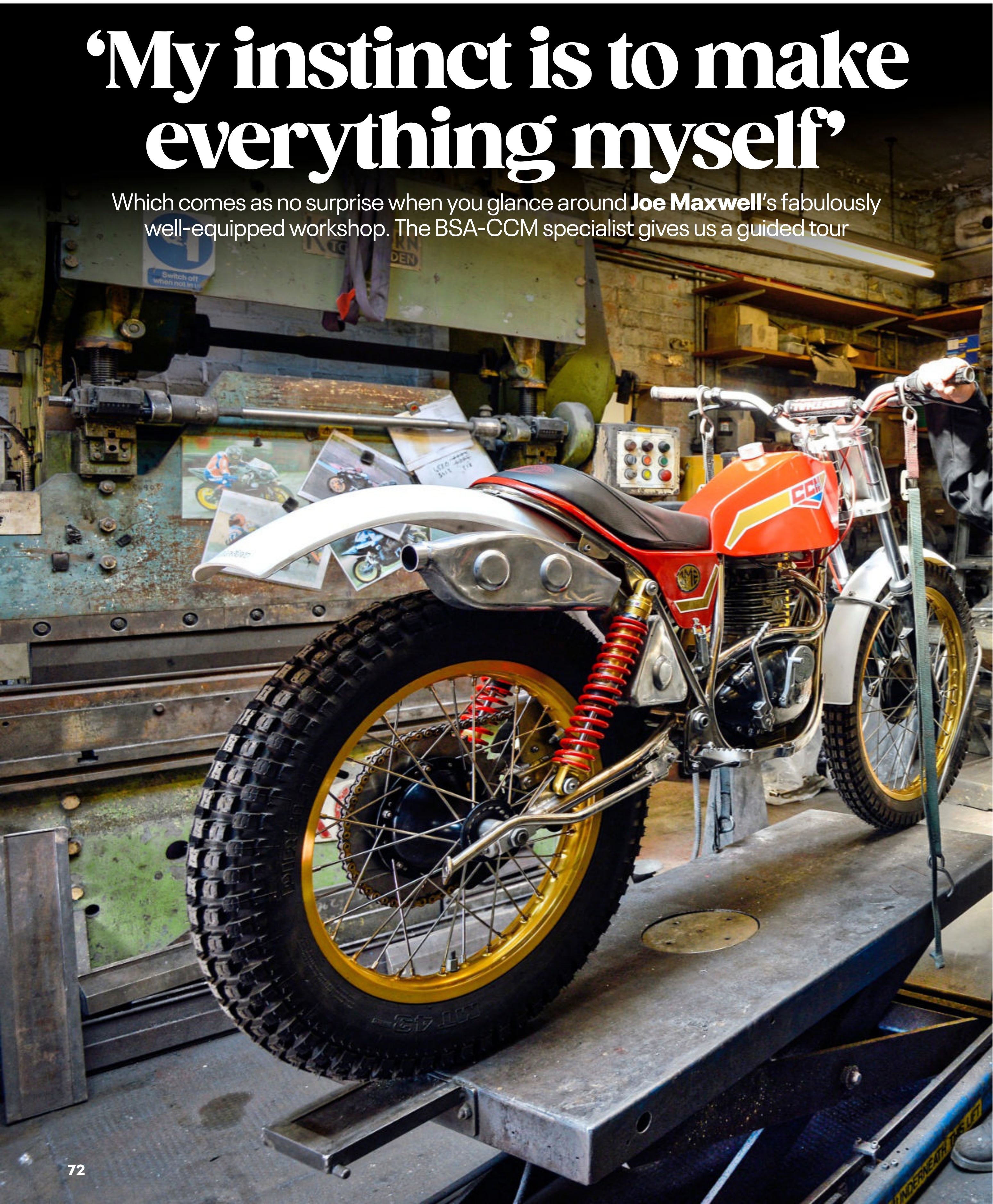
THE WORKSHOP

Workshops + Knowledge + British bike basics + Project bikes + Technique

Photography **GREG MOSS**

‘My instinct is to make everything myself’

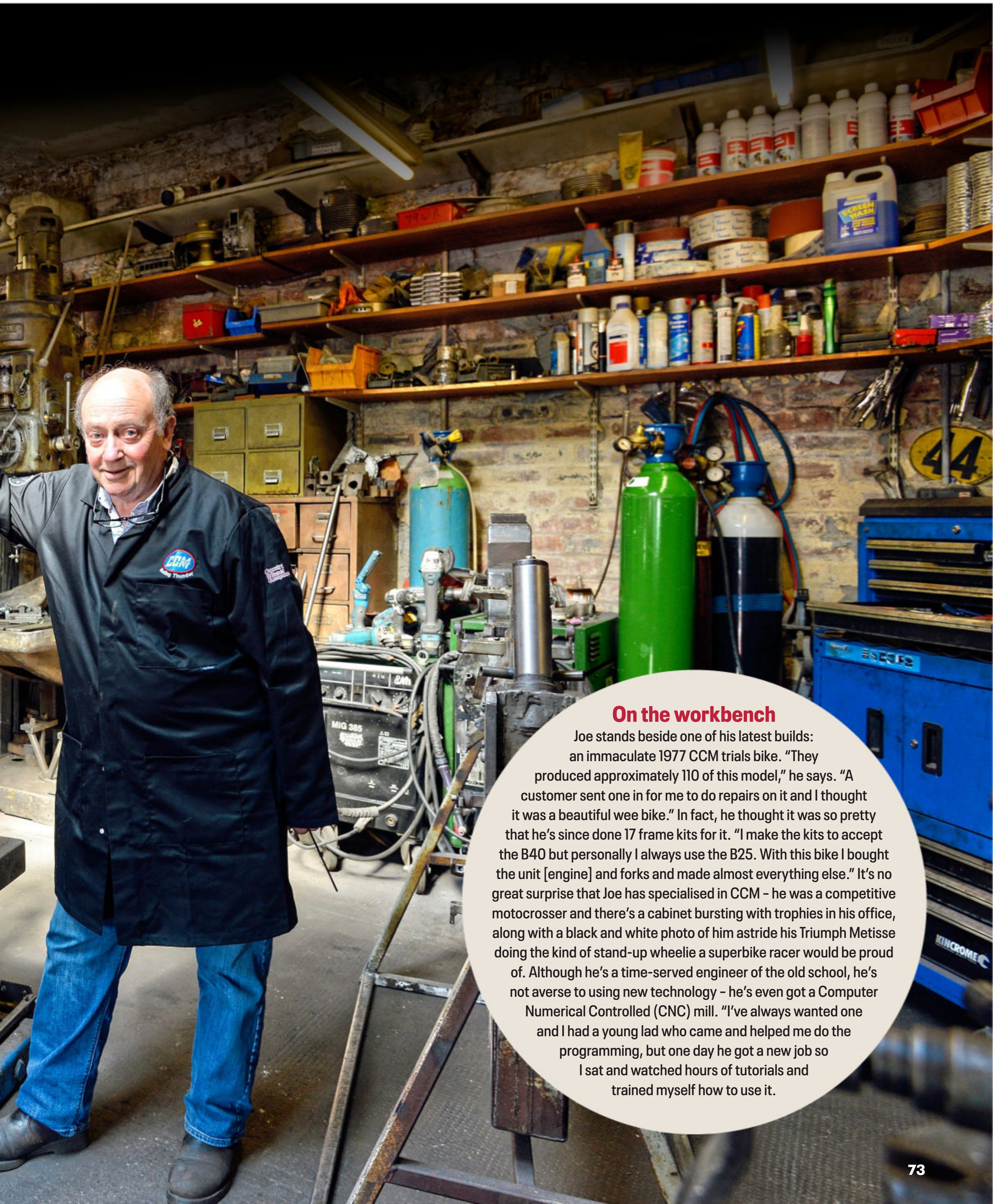
Which comes as no surprise when you glance around **Joe Maxwell**’s fabulously well-equipped workshop. The BSA-CCM specialist gives us a guided tour



78 **Technique**
Revive blue spot calipers

81 **Project bikes**
Scott, Morini and Bantam

94 **Brit Bike Basics**
Lever and throttle knowledge



On the workbench

Joe stands beside one of his latest builds: an immaculate 1977 CCM trials bike. "They produced approximately 110 of this model," he says. "A customer sent one in for me to do repairs on it and I thought it was a beautiful wee bike." In fact, he thought it was so pretty that he's since done 17 frame kits for it. "I make the kits to accept the B40 but personally I always use the B25. With this bike I bought the unit [engine] and forks and made almost everything else." It's no great surprise that Joe has specialised in CCM – he was a competitive motocrosser and there's a cabinet bursting with trophies in his office, along with a black and white photo of him astride his Triumph Metisse doing the kind of stand-up wheelie a superbike racer would be proud of. Although he's a time-served engineer of the old school, he's not averse to using new technology – he's even got a Computer Numerical Controlled (CNC) mill. "I've always wanted one and I had a young lad who came and helped me do the programming, but one day he got a new job so I sat and watched hours of tutorials and trained myself how to use it.

"I had my 40th birthday here and I'm now 77," says Joe Maxwell, calculating how long he's spent fabricating and machining in his workshop in Thornhill, Dumfriesshire. His business is dedicated to manufacturing frame kits and parts, as well as building and repairing all BSA-model CCMs.

"I opened my first workshop, which was just up the road, in 1973. To begin with it was more agricultural work, then we got into manufacturing trailers for the Ministry of Defence. When I closed that I moved onto working on bikes myself, which I've done ever since. I was doing both until about 2000."

'Alan gave me permission to reproduce any of the BSA-model CCMs'

A keen motocrosser, he met Mike Barnes – then a works rider for CCM – and his mechanic John Bethell ('a CCM wizard', as Maxwell describes him). And through them he met Alan Clews of CCM. "Alan gave me permission to reproduce any of the BSA-model CCMs and I believe I am the only person who has that privilege."

joemaxwell-engineering.com

Home-made tube bender

"Here I'm bending a tube to form part of a frame. The frames are all made of T45 aircraft-quality tubing which is a very light, strong material. The bender is one of the many tools I made myself and I've had it since I've been making frames. A lot of the tools in here you can't buy - they're all specially made for a specific job. I just make them and carry on. My natural instinct is to make everything myself - except money! That still eludes me!"

Meaty press brake

"This is a press brake [a machine tool used to bend sheet metal - Ed]. I've made all my own tooling for pressing the tanks, which are made from 2mm aluminium. I've had this press since 1995 and it's quite ancient now. I got it through the company I used to make industrial trailers for - it was surplus to their requirements so I bought it with quite a lot of useful tooling included."

JOE MAXWELL
ENGINEERING
M.07836 209886

Bikes for sale

🟥 "The one on the left is a 1977 trials bike. The enduro bike on the right is my own - I made it for my son to ride. The 1974 motocrosser in the middle belongs to a very good friend and customer, Fraser Dykes, who's very into his bikes. I made that one for him. Both the trials bike and the motocrosser are for sale if anyone's interested."

Casting and machining the hubs

🟥 "These are some of the CCM hubs I've made. First I get them cast out of LM25 aluminium. I make the patterns to allow for shrinkage because you get about 1mm shrinkage for every 80. They're cast at an excellent foundry in Derby. They're then heat treated and then I'll machine them using the CNC mill. They're not finished but they're ready to be fitted with the cast iron brake lining. Getting the programming into the mill is the biggest problem but once that's done it's straightforward."

Pillar drill

🟥 "This is my British-made pillar drill, which you can drill up to three inches with. I bought it at a bankruptcy sale in the midlands. It's very useful."

My favourite bikes

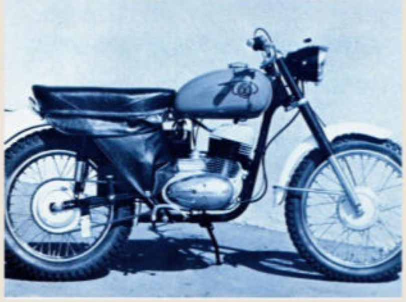
Joe Maxwell has owned some real beauties...

250 Manx Norton

"At one time I had the 250 and 500 Manx Nortons of Bob McIntyre [the Scottish TT star]. The two outside ones are Bob's 500s, and the middle one is my 250 that was built for Bob by his friend and sponsor Joe Potts. I road raced it and it was magnificent."

Triumph Metisse

"My Triumph Metisse is one of my all-time favourites. I made new camshafts for it and both cylinders fired together so it was actually a twingle instead of a twin. I just sold it last year to a chap in Ireland. What a superb bike."



250 single port CZ

"I had a lot of success when I won my championship on the single port CZs in 1967. There were ten meetings in the season, and each meeting had three races that I competed in. I won every one - 30 races out of 30."

Manual mill

"This is a turret mill so you can turn the head at different angles. I use it when I'm doing the scallops, as you call them, for joining the tubes together when you're welding them. You can work out the angles and hold the tube in the vice, and then cut the scallop with the milling machine and it makes a perfect job. I bought that in the '90s. It was made in 1973 and was manufactured in Yugoslavia. The chuck that you see on the left side of it is for cutting degrees."

Manual lathe

"This manual lathe was one of the first things I put into the workshop. I can't understand how people can work on motorcycles without a lathe – I've even made crankshafts. It's a good accurate old lathe. You just have to look after the slideways."

CNC mill

"This is a Hurco VM10 which works to about one micron. I use it to machine the hubs and sidecasings. There are lots of different ideas that I want to try – as I get older I want to do less pulling of tubes and frames and more programming of the CNC machine."

Useful things

Just some of the essential items in Joe's workshop

Deburring tool

Cost: Nowt. Where: Joe's brain

"It's a drill that I've put a handle on. I use it for deburring holes. I have proper deburring tools [you can get them from stores such as Cromwell Tools for £30 or so – Ed], but I find this quite handy for some jobs."

Calipers

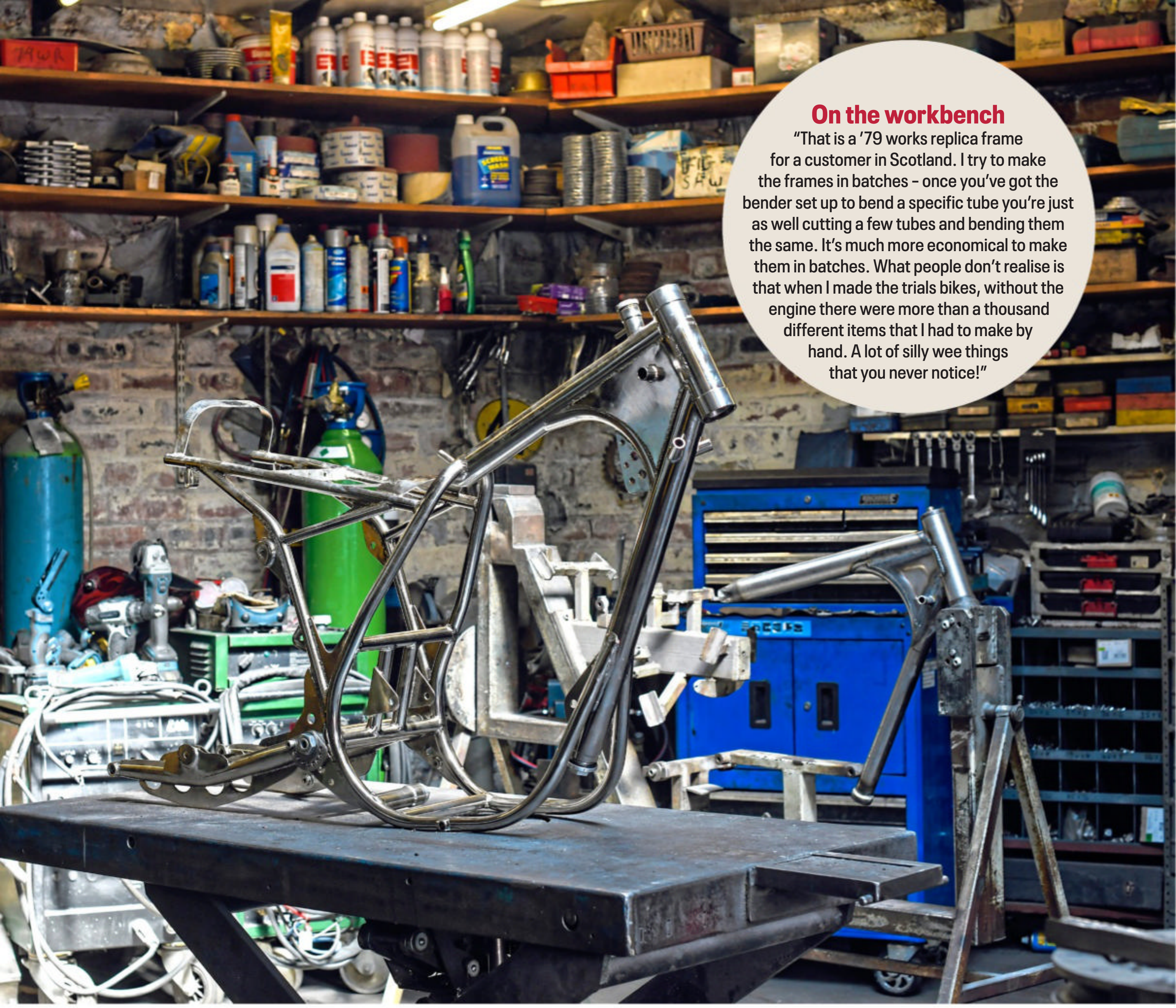
Cost: £15-£150. Where: Tool stores

"My digital calipers and manual calipers are used daily and are always sitting on the benches ready for action. But if I'm working with the CNC machine, the tolerances are finer and I'll go to the micrometer."

Pivot head ratchet spanner

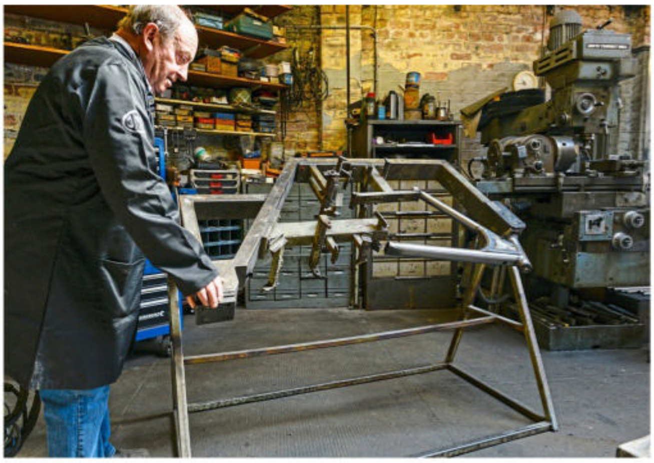
Cost: £7.99-plus. Where: Cromwell Tools

"I don't go for specific brands. When I was serving my time there were a lot of King Dick and Britool spanners but we went for Stahlwille, a German make, and they were as good as you could get."



On the workbench

"That is a '79 works replica frame for a customer in Scotland. I try to make the frames in batches – once you've got the bender set up to bend a specific tube you're just as well cutting a few tubes and bending them the same. It's much more economical to make them in batches. What people don't realise is that when I made the trials bikes, without the engine there were more than a thousand different items that I had to make by hand. A lot of silly wee things that you never notice!"



Frame jiggery

"Here I'm working on a frame in a jig. It's a 1974 motocross frame that's going to Austria. I have now made 160 frame kits and sent them all over the world – Australia, New Zealand, America, everywhere. I made the jig myself. I actually have two of these jigs so I can produce two at a time if need be. The frames are made as they were traditionally, so the headstock and swingarm are TIG welded and the remainder is bronze welded."

'I made the crankshaft'

"The bike on the right is quite special – I made the engine with a new crankshaft, making it a shorter stroke. It's based on the 1979 CCM motocross model but I've made quite a few changes. For example, I put the swingarm pivot close to the gearbox. It's road registered so I use it sometimes for road runs. My son has ridden very successfully on it, beating plenty of Japanese bikes."

Next month

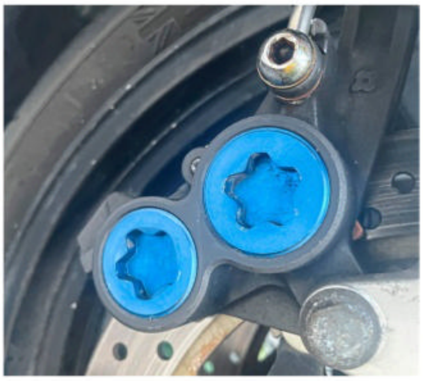
Inside Andy Tiernan Classics

Overhaul 'blue spots'

First seen in the 1990s, Yamaha's distinctively coloured calipers are a retro-fit favourite for many modern classics. Ensuring tip-top fettle is easier than their racy exterior suggests

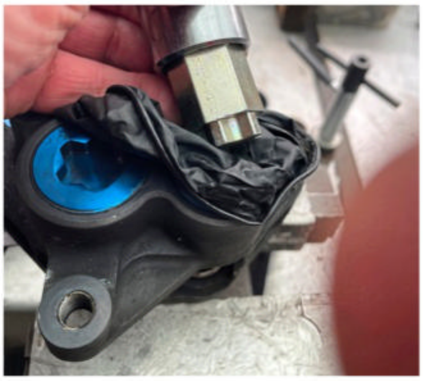
Alan Seeley

'Use rubber-safe grease when fitting brake piston seals. This will slow the build-up of oxidisation.'



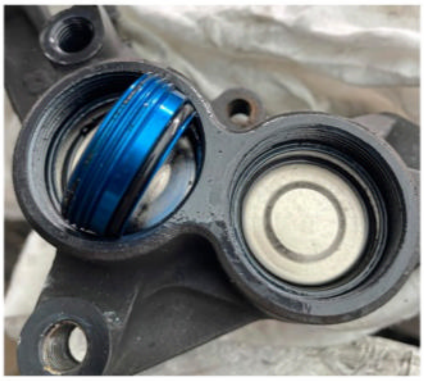
1 I've got the blues

Yamaha's 'blue spot' caliper has been with us in the UK since the Thunderace and Thundercat in 1996. Rightly lauded as a powerful and predictable braking solution thanks to its monobloc (one-piece) construction, in its time it has hauled up many Yams including the R1. It's also become a popular retro-fit to the TRX850, and also the TDR250 for those who can't be bothered to overhaul the stock Sumitomo. So let's look at what's needed to revamp a blue spot.



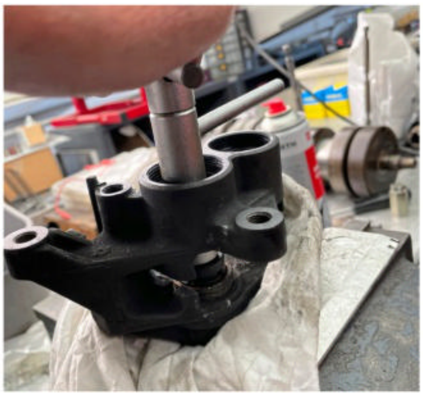
2 The right tool

As a monobloc, obviously you can't split a blue spot to extract the pistons - and there is precious little space in the jaw of the caliper for piston pliers. Your portals to piston extraction are the blue spots that lend the caliper its nickname. You can find pattern copies of the special tool required to undo them all over the internet, eBay specifically. A latex workshop glove between the tool and the anodised aluminium blue spots will allow them to be undone with minimal damage.



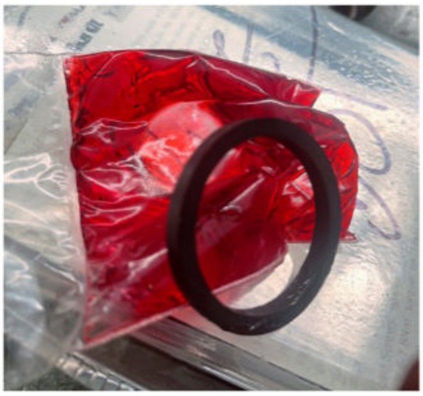
3 Inspection time

Check the O-rings on the blue spots for any signs of perishing or damage. I've overhauled many of these calipers over the years and have yet to find a problem here - but always check. With the blue spots removed, you can now push the outer pistons downwards into the caliper jaw and take them out of the caliper. Should they be reluctant to move because of stiction with the seals, a little gentle persuasion with a soft drift will soon have them on their way.



4 Making good

With the outer pistons out of the way, a caliper piston-puller tool can be deployed to pluck the inner slugs from their lairs. Then get in there with plenty of brake cleaner to remove all the manky old brake fluid. Hook the old seals out with an engineer's pick, then use the same tool to remove any oxidisation from the grooves. Blue spots don't usually suffer from this problem excessively, because they are of decent quality manufacture.



5 Quality matters

Reassembly is the reverse of disassembly, as they used to say in the old aftermarket workshop manuals. However, clean the pistons and, if pitted by corrosion, replace them. Never skimp on brakes - it's not worth it - so use only quality replacement seals. The ones pictured above are from Powerhouse. Rubber-safe brake grease is better than brake fluid - especially on the seals, as it repels the water hygroscopic brake fluid inevitably attracts.

In the toolbox

Essential

Blue spot tool, easily sourced online for a little over a tenner. Get a piston extraction tool (about eight quid) and engineer's pick, too (a few quid for a pack, or rummage at an autojumble). Brake cleaner is a must.

Nice to have

Ultrasonic cleaner to get surgically clean. A fresh set of brake pads.

WORDS: ALAN SEELEY PHOTOGRAPHY: ALAN SEELEY

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Rick's gradually working his way out of the dog house by fixing the Scott

Accidentally fixed it...

Having blown up his partner's Scott, Rick's found rebuilding the two-stroke twin takes longer than anticipated. But there's now serious progress, thanks to a fortuitous find

Rick Parkington
1928 Scott Flying Squirrel

The water-cooled two-stroke twin predates Yamaha's RD350LC by over 70 years. But they're awkward to fix if you blow one up, as Rick is rediscovering...

Scott two-stroke water-cooled twins have been considered a bit odd since they first appeared, although the design was as simple and effective as it was unusual. But that's not to say it cannot be improved.

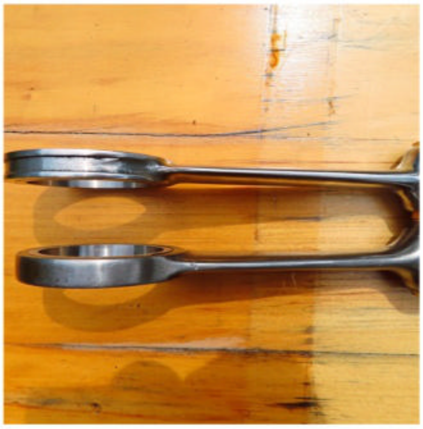
Last month, I explained how reduced crankcase sealing may have contributed to the big-end failure on my partner Judy's 500cc Flying Squirrel, and this is one of the Scott's oddities. Crankshaft sealing is by 'gland seals' – spring-loaded discs, rotating in oil against the main bearing outer. They're victims to corrosion, wear, distortion or lack of oil, so long-time Scott specialist Roger Moss devised a replacement system using conventional garter seals.

It's simpler and makes the bikes easier to start. However, finding a split gasket let the gland seals off the hook. Last month had me musing whether to go for a bottom-end upgrade or simply fit new parts – and as I prefer to stick with original if I can, this swung it. Judy's bike has run well for years, so I decided to forget upgrades and just order what we need to fix it.

Where do you get new parts for a 97-year-old bike? Luckily, Scott's enduring design means newly-made parts are readily available from the Scott Owners Club and various specialists. Roger Moss is now in semi-retirement, but was still able to supply most of what I needed along with some useful advice. Stupidly, I only ordered one new big-end washer, soon finding I needed two. But visiting my friend Simon, I was amazed to see a pile of them on his bench. "Any idea what they are?" he asked. "They came with a friction steering damper, but they're nothing to do with it." It was one of those happy accidental occurances that keep you sane through the slings and arrows old bikes fire at you.

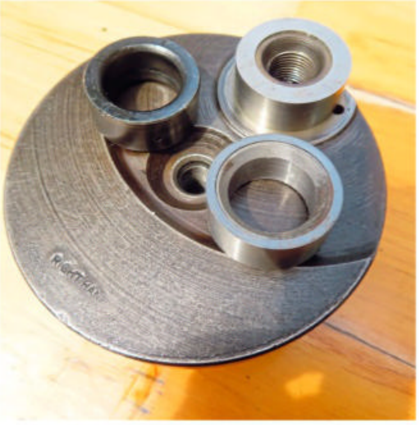
I'm not as far ahead as I'd hoped, but the bottom end's done so I've fixed the bit I broke; now I just need to refresh the top end. Hopefully, by this time next month Judy will have her bike back, and I'll be out of the doghouse. Assuming I can resolve the small matter of the piston rings...

> **'Where do you get new parts? I found a pile on a friend's bench'**



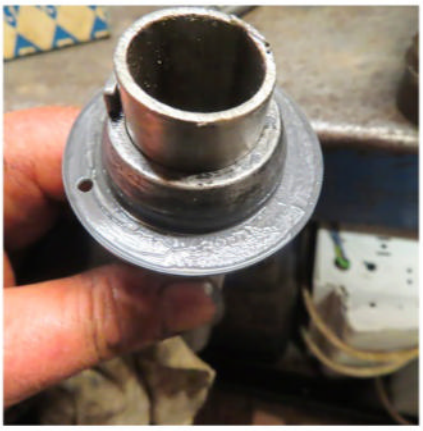
1 Long and short of it

I saved £200 by replacing only the damaged conrod; the other side is fine to put back. This is a short-stroke engine, and here you see long and short-stroke rods – watch out, there's not much difference.



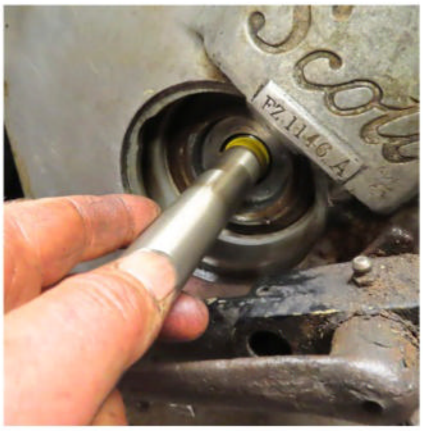
2 Rebushing

I replaced both big end 'bushes' because while the right big-end was OK, the bush was slightly loose on its crank. Both replacements were pressed home securely in the vice, using aluminium 'soft jaws'.



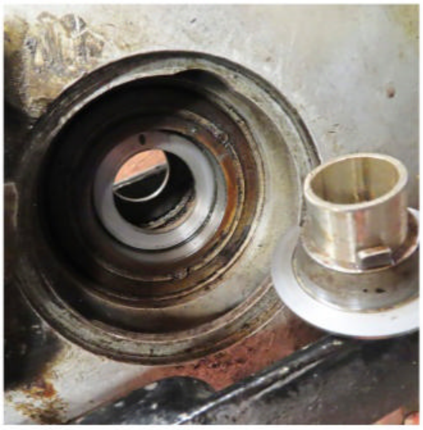
3 Doing a quick lap

To make sure the crank gland seals are making good contact, I decided to lap them in using fine grinding paste and thin oil. As with valves, it removes corrosion and reveals surface distortion.



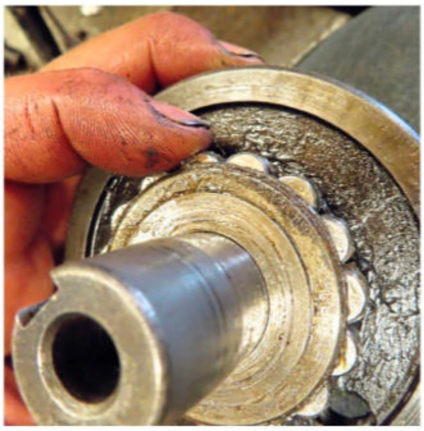
4 That'll do it

You may not be able to use a rubber-sucker grinding stick, but this piece of tube is a good fit inside – and by wrapping a bit of tape around the outside, the gland stuck firmly enough to work the same way.



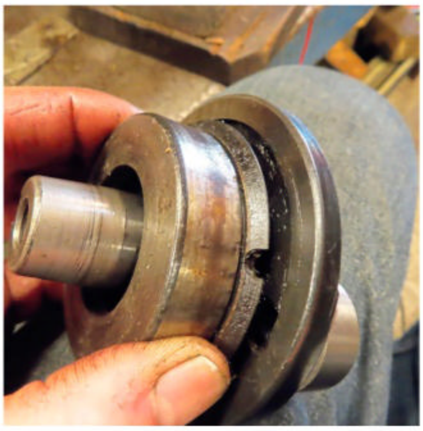
5 Spick and span

I'm happy with this even, grey finish. But grinding paste and bearings don't mix very well, so I washed it out carefully, drying with clean white kitchen roll and blew out the oil hole from the feed side.



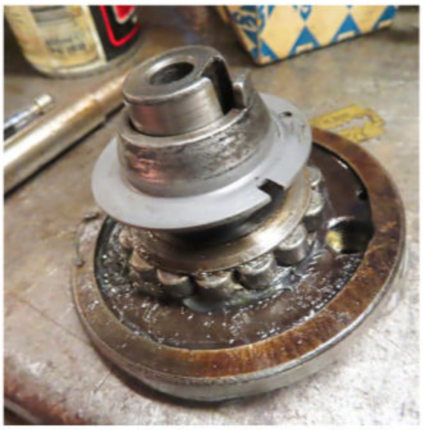
6 Don't knock it

The main bearings are uncaged rollers. They need to be stuck in place with grease – but if any move at all as you insert the crank, it won't go together. A slight knock or shaky hand will do it.



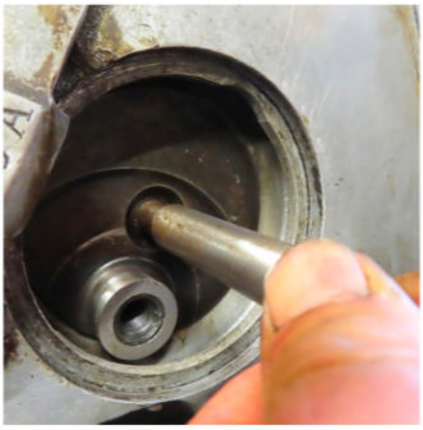
7 Settling the rollers

I have an old outer bearing that I can fit over the greased rollers to make sure all the rollers are fully settled. Once that's done, as long as I get the crank properly lined up, it should slide straight in.



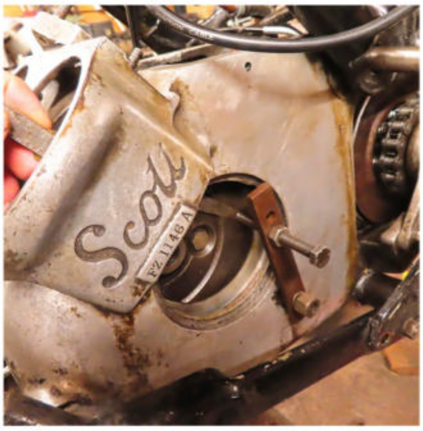
8 Give it a wedgy

The gland and spring is assembled by lining up the tongue with the keyway and pushing one crank into the bearing. The spring will try to push it back out, so have a wedge handy to keep it in place.



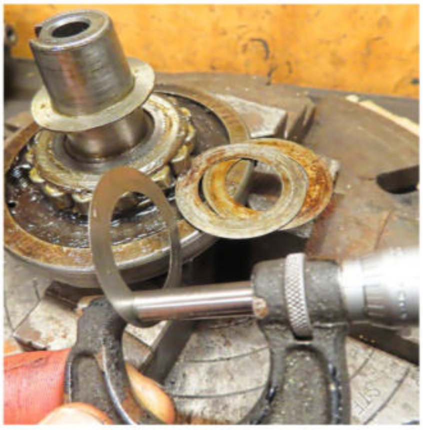
9 Coming together

The centre bolt makes a good handle to get it in straight – I use this stepped bar for the other side. Once both sides are in place , hold them together with the centre bolt and remove your wedge.



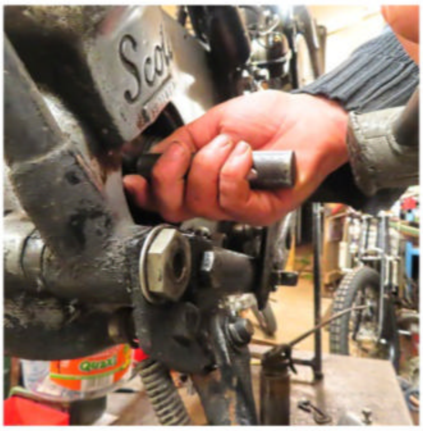
10 Floating about

Next, fully tighten the centre bolt and check crankshaft end-float. Roger Moss said 0.009in is the standard clearance, but he advises 0.015in. Our figure was far too much, closer to 0.030in (0.75mm).



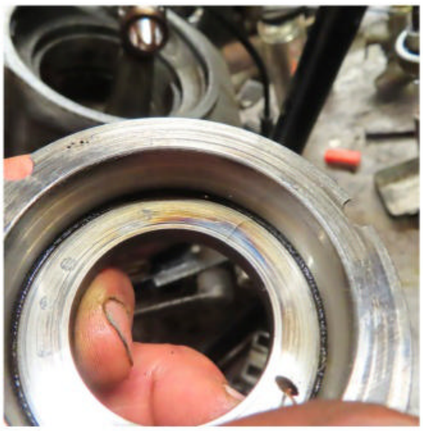
11 Shimming tweaks

Trial fitting the conrods revealed the crank was biased slightly to the left. So I adjusted the shimming with that in mind, ending up with both conrods fitting easily and 20 thou of end-float.



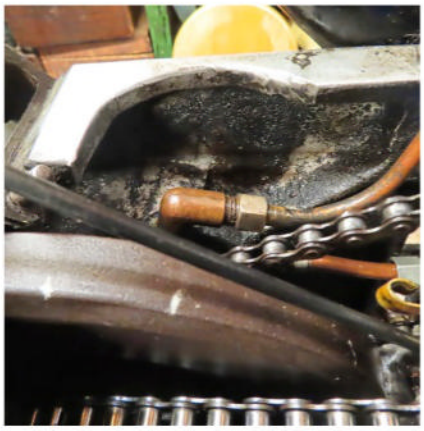
12 Use a tapping stick

To settle the crank halves (and lose that extra five thou of float) you support one crank and give the other three smart hammer blows before re-tightening the bolt. With our engine still in the frame…



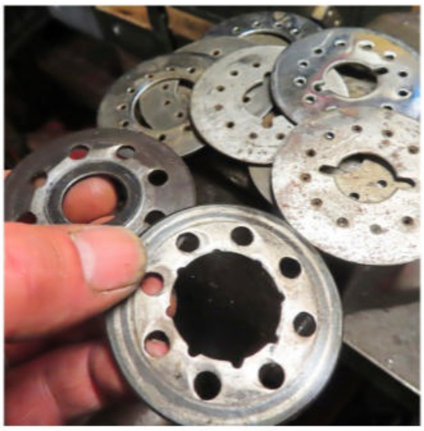
13 Cracking up

… it was a two-man job, delivering synchronised blows from either side. The impact *must* be taken by the crank and not the bearing cup, which can shift position – or crack, like this one has.



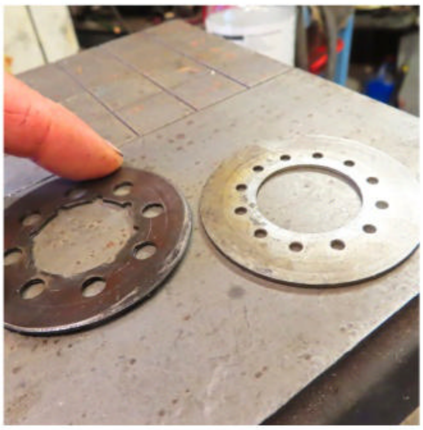
14 Oiling up properly

Cup shift can affect oiling. Check supply timing by turning the crank, while blowing through each pipe and mark the opening/closing points on the flywheel. The marks should be 180° apart.



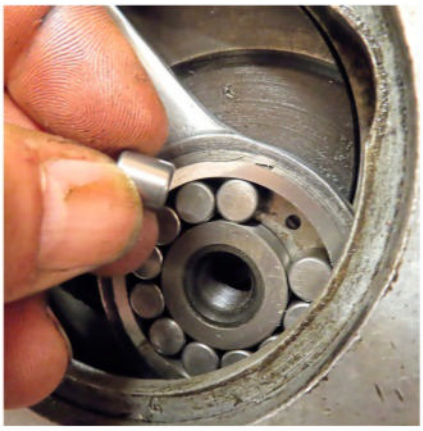
15 'Hang on, are they…?'

I'd forgotten to order new big-end washers to replace these damaged originals – but incredibly, my friend Simon just happened to have some on his bench that he didn't want. Fate smiles on you sometimes…



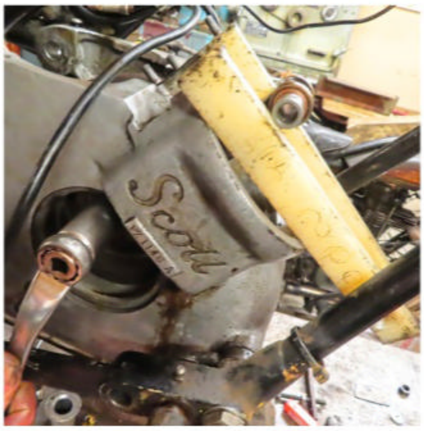
16 On the level

Before fitting, it's worth checking that the washers are flat – you can see the old one isn't. The one with the large hole fits over the big-end bush – remember to fit it before the rod and rollers.



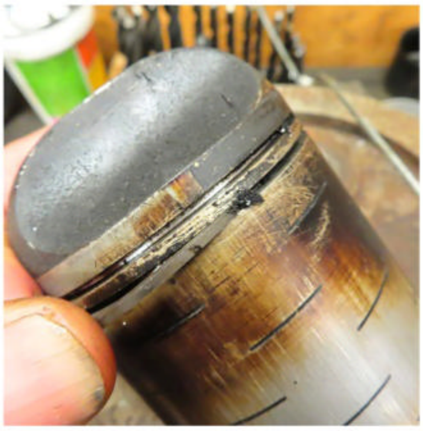
17 Look what I found

Another coincidence. Last year I found a box of NOS rollers at a jumble, thinking they might be handy – and they have proved to be so. It's a 'crowded roller' design with no cage. Once fitted, oil them liberally.



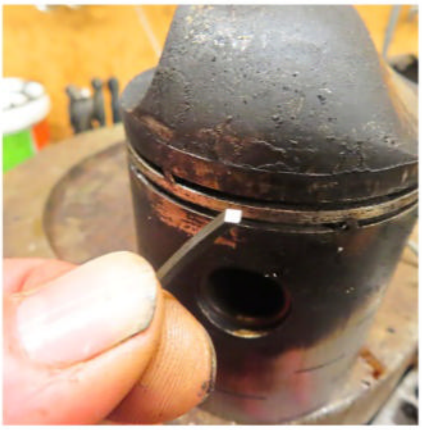
18 Nice nylons

Then fit the outer washer and the bolt. You can lock the crank by supporting the gudgeon pin with some hardwood or nylon bars. I used my home-made screwdriver socket to tighten them.



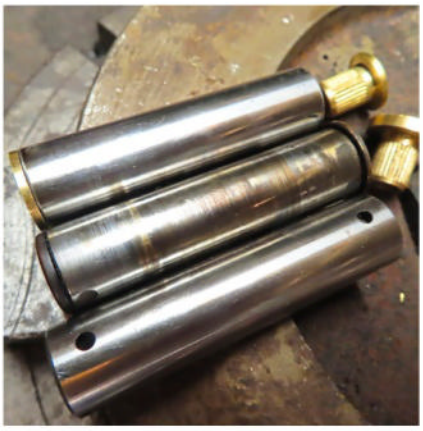
19 **More cost deflected**

Next onto the top end. Fortunately, the piston hadn't seized – Scott deflector pistons are costly to replace. But a couple of rings were stuck in the grooves, which needed sorting out using an old ring.



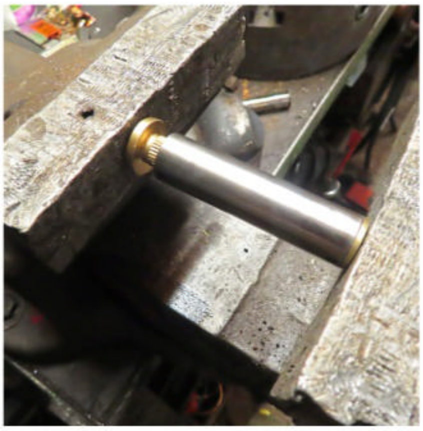
20 **Ring repurposing**

Grooves can distort or burr from seizure, as well as getting gummed up. Sharpening a broken ring to a chisel edge on its top, bottom or inside edge can scrape away both carbon and excess aluminium.



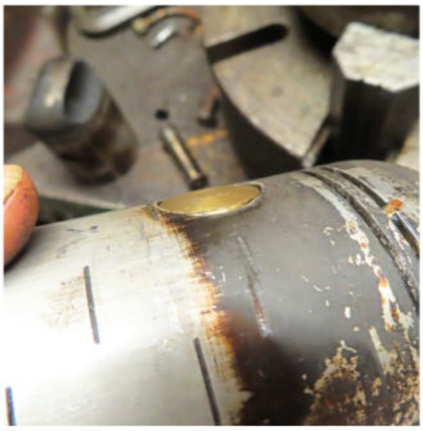
21 **Fettling to fit**

The new gudgeon pins are made in 600cc length. Using an angle grinder (gently) while spinning them in the lathe kept the ends square – maybe not enough for circlips, but fine for bronze pads.



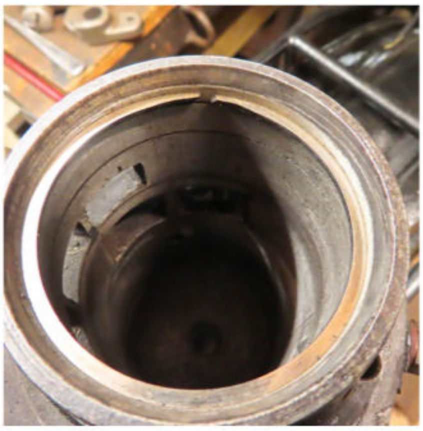
22 **Pressing the pins**

Pads are knurled for a tight press fit. Most of the knurling tears off as they're pressed in, but the gudgeons are drilled for locating pins, so I pressed both pads home and secured them with roll pins.



23 **Not quite right**

Looks like this pad isn't the right dome radius for a 500cc piston. It's easily sorted, but a reminder that it's important to check new parts on older bikes; they may cover more than one model and need slight alteration.



24 **That's a bother**

This piston ring gap is pretty extreme, even allowing for the ring locating peg in the piston. I'd rather fit new rings, but with original stocks long exhausted I'm going to have to get my thinking cap on…

Three things…

Grinding paste

Valve grinding paste isn't only for valves. Mixed with thin oil, it will blend surfaces and reveal irregularities. Beware use on tapers, however – it can leave a series of rings that make the fit worse.

End-float check tools

You don't need to pay out for an expensive micrometer or dial gauges to measure end float – all you need is a stout bracket, bolted to the engine with an adjustable bolt to set as a fixed stop. Then push the crank both ways and measure the difference with feeler blades.

Vee blocks

Don't assume vee blocks are just for engineers with bustling machine shops. They're a cheap, useful way to support round things for drilling, marking, cutting or filing, preventing damage by spreading the load.

Next Month

Scott rings are like rocking horse teeth, so to finish the Scott's motor Rick might have to make his own…

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: RICK PARKINGTON

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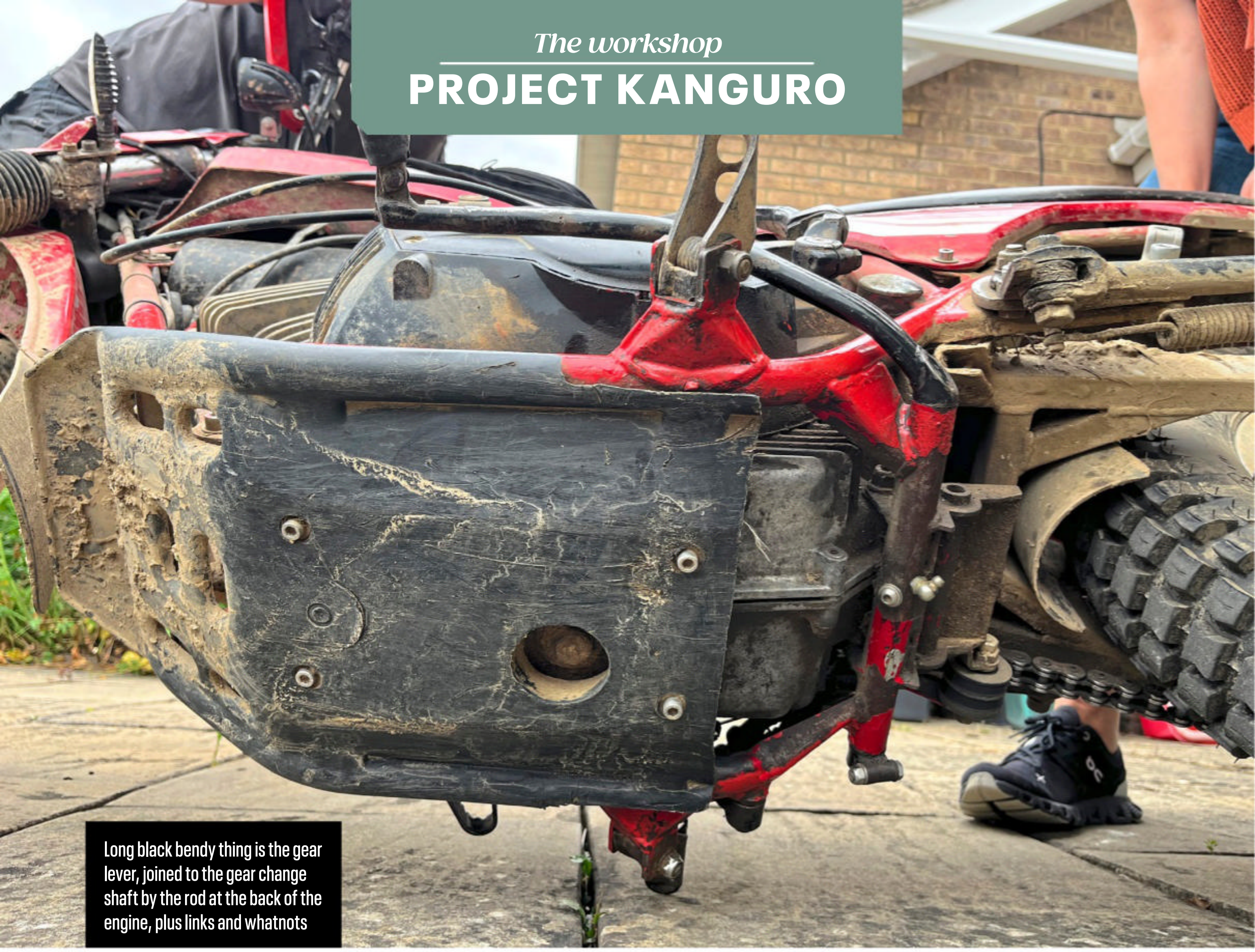


Long black bendy thing is the gear lever, joined to the gear change shaft by the rod at the back of the engine, plus links and whatnots

Sorting a sloppy gear shift

Moto Morini's Kanguro has a fabulously Heath Robinson gear linkage that provides fabulously sloppy shifts. Sorting it is a masterclass in bushes, reaming and rose joints...

Rupert Paul
Former *Performance Bikes* magazine editor and rewire specialist Rupert has waded deep into the wonderful world of classics with a BSA 650 Thunderbolt and this awkwardly shifting Morini.

The thing about buying a new old bike is it takes you a while to understand it. It was obvious the gear change on my 1982 Morini Kanguro was rubbish but figuring out why has proved surprisingly difficult.

I'd already bailed out of the Land's End Trial at about 2am, when it became impossible to select first. Heat soak tightening up the cheap nylon-lined rose joints in the gear linkage, reckoned Morini expert Benjy Straw. But after hours of patient fettling and some expensive phosphor-bronze new rose joints, it remained obdurately crap.

I rode it a bit more, off-road with some mates, and tried to understand the problem.

The bike could change gear perfectly well, in all six gears, but sometimes preferred not to. It's as if the shifts sometimes didn't go the full click, if you see what I mean. Cue false neutrals, a loss of momentum, and curses. Could the elaborate gear linkage be hitting something? Morini 350s and 500s were designed with their gear shift shaft sticking out of the right-hand side, meaning the gear change pedal was on the right too. When all bikes needed left shift in the late 1970s, the factory had a choice: redesign the engine or bodge the existing arrangement. Understandably, they chose the second option. So, there's a long, springy gear lever attached to a stiff rod passing through a tube attached to the frame behind the engine. The other end of this rod moves a second lever, attached to a third lever via a rod with rose joints. This bolts to the original gear shift shaft.

To have any chance of a clean shift, everything needs to be in perfect condition. I stuck the bike on a crate, fished off the right-hand cover and watched while I moved the box through the gears. Sure enough, there was the faintest touch of a rose joint against the frame. The crossover linkage wasn't helping. After 50,000 miles it had a lot of slop.

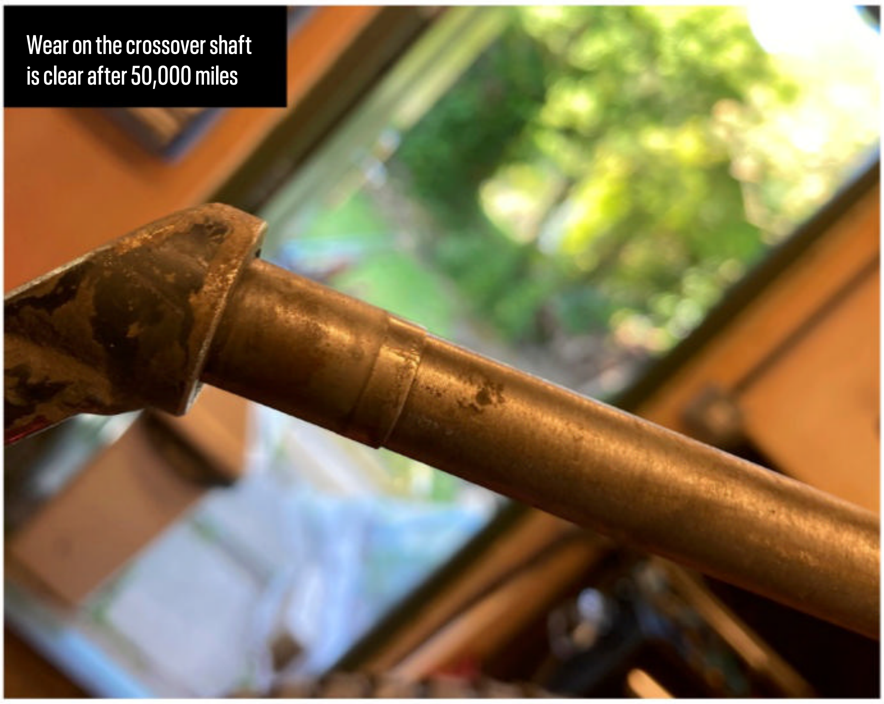
I stripped the gear lever out, hoping the steel tube that carries its rod contained replaceable bushes. It did! I measured them with a Vernier and ordered two new ones (£8.44). I also sourced some new, smaller, non-nylon rose joints (£4.55). With rose joints, generally get a replica of the original; if you don't know, get one that looks as similar as possible. They come in cheap nylon (avoid) or decent phosphor-bronze, sometimes with little weatherproof rubber boots. These joints also come in left- and right-hand threads (combining one of each allows you to shorten or lengthen the linkage rod in a single twist), plus male and female versions, so make sure you buy the right thing.

With the new bushes fitted and reamed, and the crossover shaft restored, it was time to see if I'd been successful. Were the reamed-out bushes even vaguely in line with each other? Turns out they were. The rod now pivoted with absolutely no slop.

Elated, I added a grease nipple to the crossover tube. Morini had already provided a threaded hole, but it was metric, and all I had were BSP nipples. I used an M6 screw to bung the unwanted hole and pumped the crossover tube full of grease. Satisfyingly, it splurged out of both ends at the same time.

That took care of the crossover shaft. Now for the gear linkage itself.

The trick with linkages is to ensure they don't hit anything solid as they move. Once that's achieved, make the actuator arms as parallel as possible, so that a 10mm input movement in one arm produces a 10mm output in the other. On the Morini, there's one more consideration: the gear shift shaft sticking out of the gearbox sits further out from the centreline of the bike than the first actuator arm. So viewed from above, the rose joint rod runs diagonally outwards from back to front.


Wear on the crossover shaft is clear after 50,000 miles

> **'The solution is as obvious as it is ridiculous: sit down to change gear'**

This isn't ideal. So, it's a good idea to keep the deviation to a minimum, again to equalise the inputs and outputs as much as possible. I made several spacers on the lathe as I experimented with how the linkage moved during each gear change. I ended up with a 9mm brass spacer at the front, and a 3mm one at the back. This gave a clean run for the linkage in all conditions, with the best possible geometry viewed from the side and from above.

This was a good thing, because the next morning I was going trail riding in France for a week.

It took me another four days to learn to ride round a Kanguro's deficiencies. On the road, changing gear is (finally) fine. Off road, when you are nearly always standing up, it just hits false neutrals. The solution is as obvious as it is ridiculous: sit down to change gear. And change up with the arch of your foot, or down with the ball of your foot. Why is this? Because the gear lever is (and has to be) ten and

Wear on the crossover shaft corrected with much rubbing and patience

Fishing the old bush out of the frame tube. Thankfully, sizes are shown on its side

a half inches long. This in turn leads to three things: 1. It has a spring of at least 8mm at the toe end, under normal gear changing pressure. 2. It pivots at a point five inches behind the footrest. 3. Although you can adjust the height of the lever, you can't get it within an inch of where it really needs to be. If you do, the lever fouls the footrest mounting bolt as you (attempt to) put it into first.

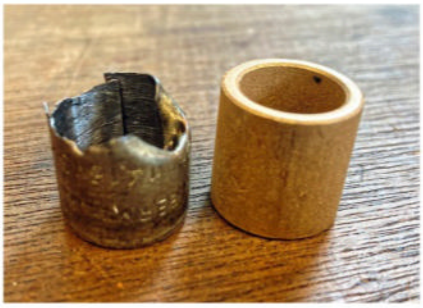
So, you have a bendy gear lever, that needs a long sweep, and you can't use your foot in the most accurate way. Easy to deal with sat down, impossible stood up. After my mud-splattered return home, I used the Morini club Whatsapp group to ask other Kanguro owners if they noticed the same thing. Some of them do. Some of them have even done the obvious, which is convert back to right shift.

I haven't yet worked out whether I have enough enthusiasm left to do that. Maybe in a few months. Meanwhile, I'm giving the bike a big, loving service, including balancing the carbs and taking Benjy's advice to rebuild the clutch. He's already sent me a selection of clutch shims which will smooth the action. And in a miniature GS kind of way, it's a fun little road bike.

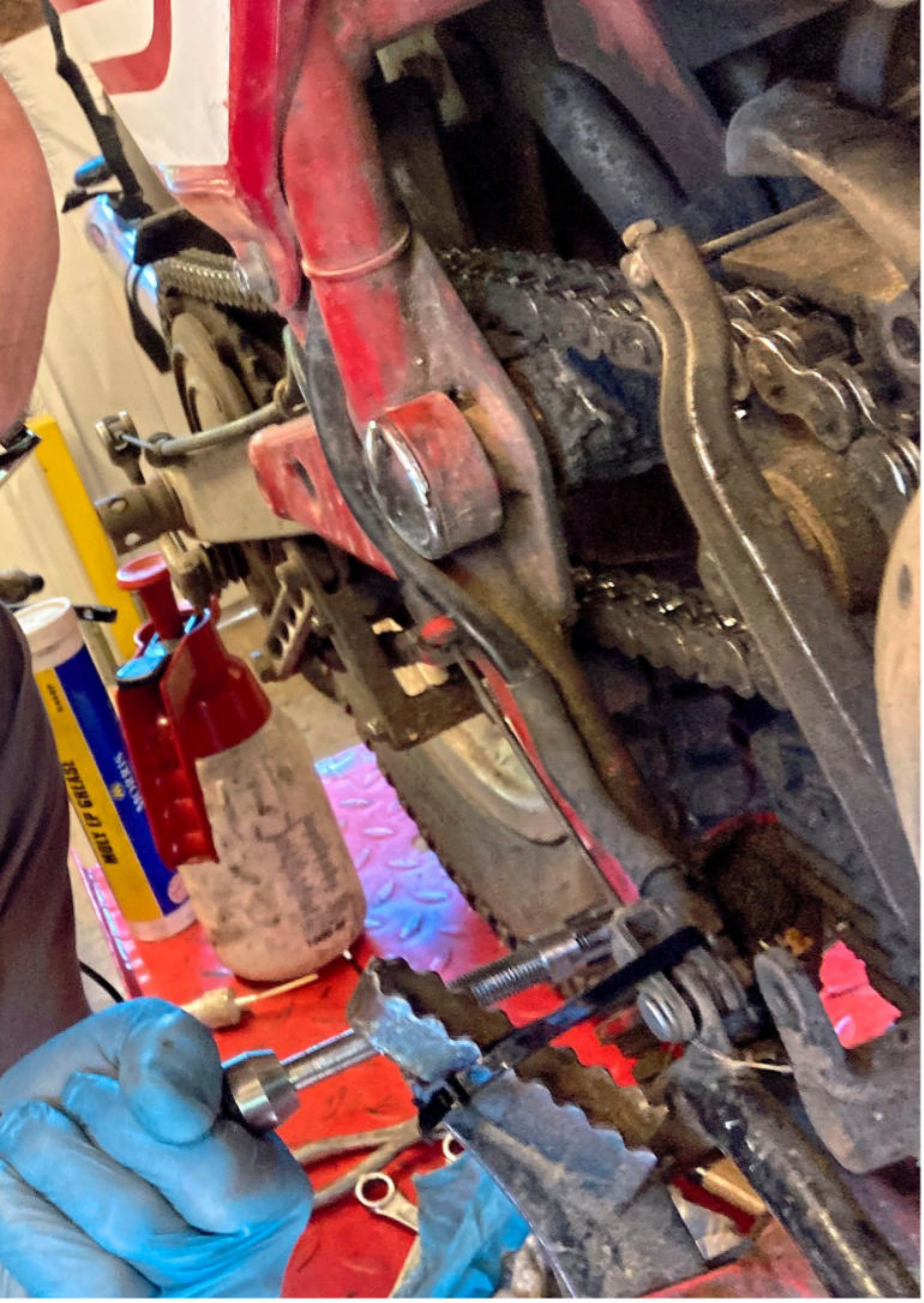
'I haven't yet worked out if I have enough enthusiasm'

Reaming out the new bush. This face is part effort, part concentration, part worry

Loaded up for the trail and ready to romp out in search of another breakdown

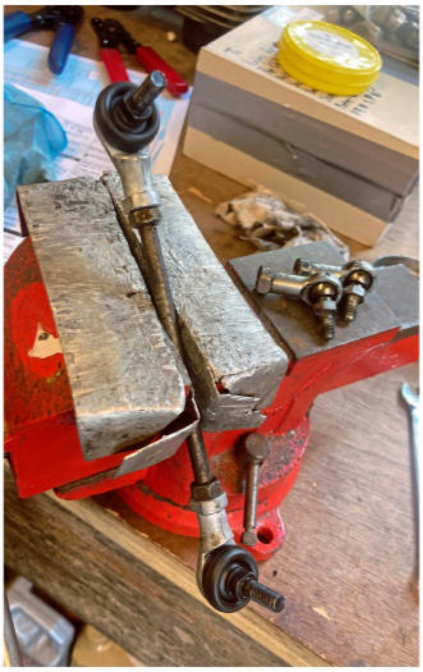

Old slightly mis-shaped bush, oilite replacement...

...and driving it in with some threaded bar and nuts



Expanding reamer has a slight look of Thunderbirds

Brass 9mm spacer helps get the linkage to behave


Sloppy old joints replaced by un-sloppy new ones

Three things...

Compact lathe is worth its weight in spacers

Hobby lathe

Any size lathe is a wondrous thing but something like the Clarke CL300 is small enough to fit in a garage workshop. Mine sits on a bench about 14in deep. I can't imagine life without it. It makes spacers, and it does boring and screwcutting. £700 used, £850 new.

Makeshift press tool

To pull new bushes into their housing, it's worth making a tool that'll do it squarely, rather than chance it with a hammer and drift. In this case I used a 12mm threaded rod to seat a bush with a 12mm ID.

Expanding reamer set

I got this for £8 at a house clearance auction. More usually you pay £40-£300, depending on quality. It's a tool to embiggen holes, accurately. You get a threaded shaft with six hardened steel blades running in tapered grooves along its length. Adjusters let you slide the blades further up the groove, expanding the effective size of the hole the blades will shave metal from. You turn the reamer with a handle used for taps and dies; a sleeve at the other end is handy if you need to brace the reamer during operation. Reaming is slow work, and it's easy to remove too much metal – once you have, you never do it again. I rarely open the box, but when you need an expanding reamer, you really need one. Keep them all clean and oiled.

Lovely to have, even if you never use them...

Bearings

Know a thrust from a taper

They're all over your bike, from the wheels and steering to the crank. **Alan Seeley** breezes through the what and why of your bike's friction-beating essentials

Photography: Bauer Archive, Shutterstock

Alan Seeley

I'm on first name terms with the staff behind the counter at my local bearing factor. They are essential allies.

A bearing allows the easy movement of parts through reduced friction. These parts might be subjected to up-and-down load (radial) or side-to-side load (axial). Different types fulfil different applications in your bike's engine, gearbox and chassis. Some spin furiously, others move at a more leisurely rate. Modern metals mean bearings give lengthy service if correctly fitted and lubricated. Motorcycle designers also tend to slightly over-specify bearings for their applications which means they enjoy extraordinary longevity given the hard work that they do.

Single-row ball and roller (1)

Typically, these are the type of bearings that things like a motorcycle's wheels, crankshaft and other parts might rotate in. Balls or rollers (think as in rolling pin) locate in grooves in inner and outer races. The balls or rollers are kept apart by a cage, usually made of steel but sometimes plastic or bronze. The cage prevents adjacent balls in a roller-element bearing bunching up and rubbing against each other. Correctly lubricated for its application (grease in wheels, oil in engines), and provided it avoids the ingress of foreign objects, a rolling-element bearing will withstand a great deal of radial loading and a moderate amount of axial stress.

Needle roller (2)

These can be thought of as roller bearings with a high length to diameter ratio, typically three to 10 times length to diameter. The thin rollers allow for a bearing with a diameter that is only a little larger than the shaft it supports. In older bikes you might find bronze bearings doing these jobs. You will typically find them in gearboxes, swingarm spindles, two-stroke small-ends, and sometimes in combination with a ball roller bearing on the drive side of rear wheels.

Plain or shell (3)

Big-end bearings are often made of steel shells with a white metal coating. The white metal is quite soft, which might seem like folly in a high-impact situation such as a big-end. However, high oil pressure as delivered in the engine takes care of much of the 'bearing' duty. Also, soft and hard metals work well together on start up before oil pressure takes over, and the softer material also resists acid oil corrosion.

Thrust (4)

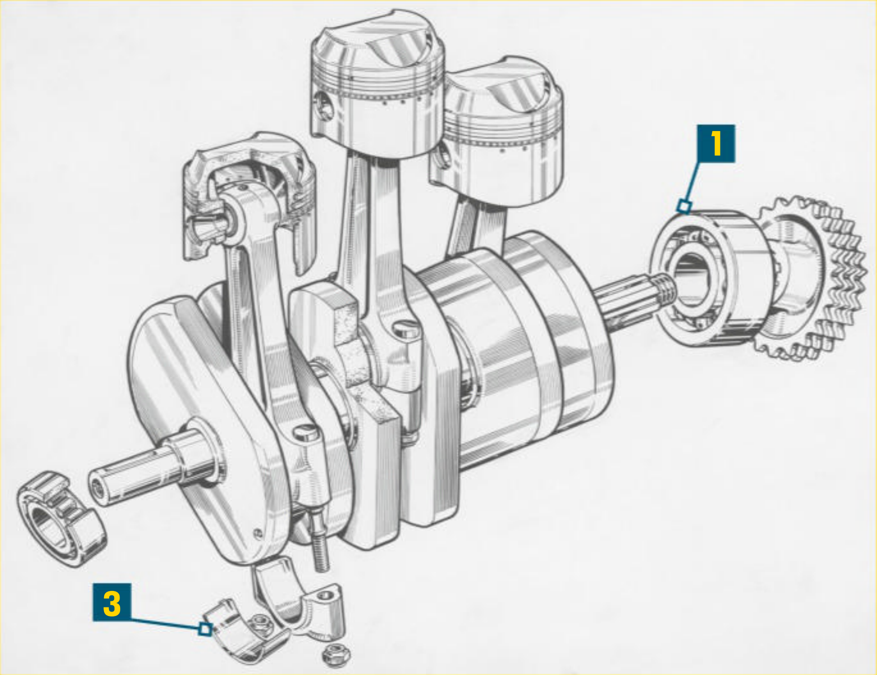
When a shaft has some sideways movement, a thrust bearing is required. It can be a bronze/hardened steel washer separating rotating and static components, while flat ball or roller designs are used for higher stress duty, for example in clutch pressure plates.

Cup and cone

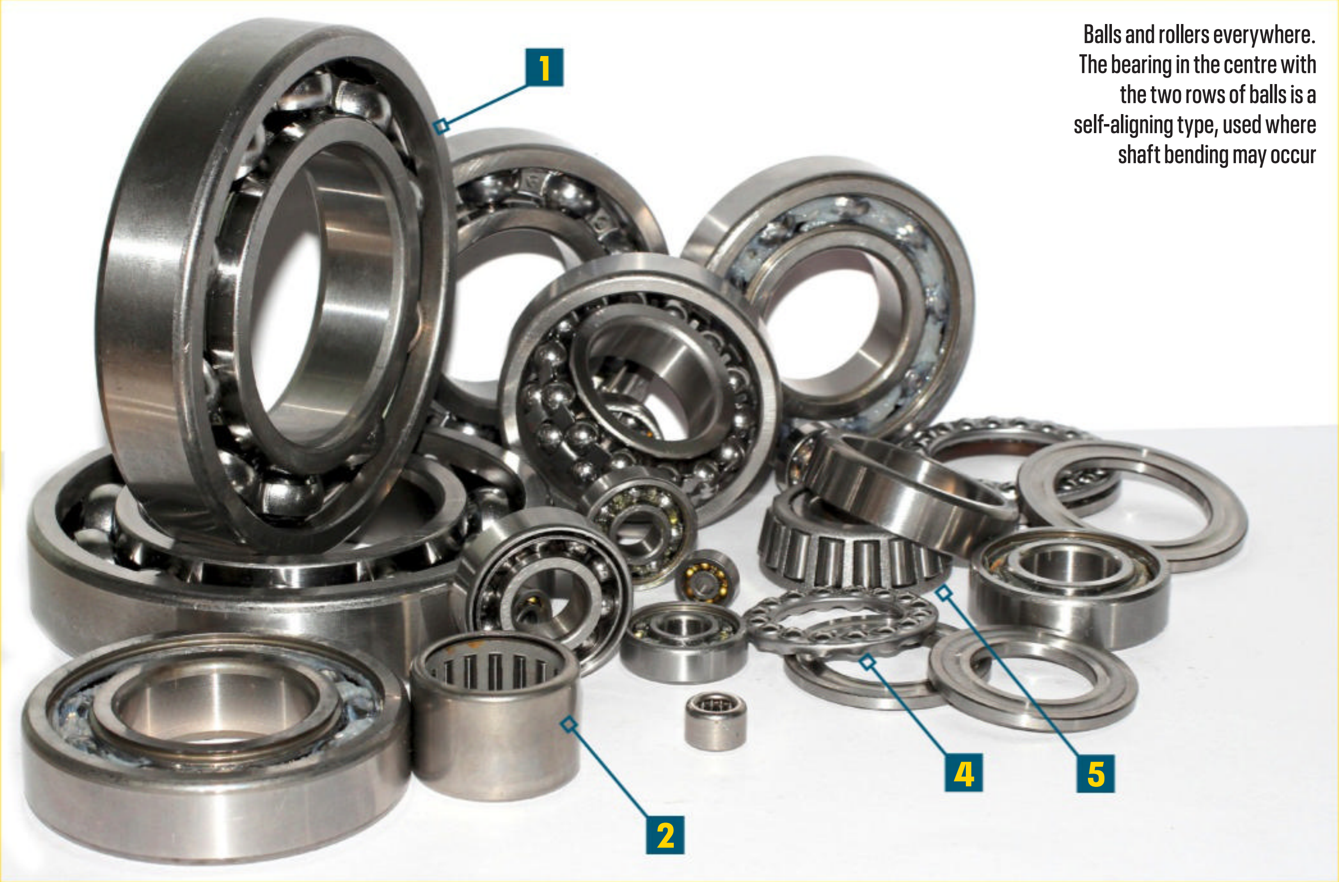
A motorcycle's steering head has to manage radial (upright steering), axial (braking) and radial/axial (steering/braking leant over) movement and forces. Cup and cone bearings were the default choice for many years. The cup and cone races are at an oblique angle to the radial plane so that the bearing offers support to both axial and radial forces. They are, however, something of a compromise and the small bearing area of the balls is under pressure from the weight of the bike before you even move off.

Taper roller (5)

The taper roller bearing is a far better choice for headstocks, its rollers offering



Triumph Trident engine, showing off a selection of its bearings – you'll find needles, balls, rollers, plain...



Balls and rollers everywhere. The bearing in the centre with the two rows of balls is a self-aligning type, used where shaft bending may occur

an increased bearing surface. Hence they became the default fit for most manufacturers, particularly on large performance machines. They're also the smart choice for a retro-fit if restoring a bike or when replacement of cup and cones is due. Occasionally found in swingarm pivots and wheels, cup and cone bearings were replaced by tapers on many bikes from the late 1920s but were still used by BMW up until 1985.

Spherical roller

These allow for an element of flex in heavily loaded shafts by having barrel-shaped rollers that prevent digging in and chipping of the bearing track. They were famously used by Norton in the Commando to overcome the failures of standard roller main bearings.

Angular contact ball

This type of bearing has the races at an oblique angle to the radial plane to increase the ability to handle axial loads. Not common, although they continued to be used by the likes of Ducati long after they'd fallen out of favour elsewhere.

Clearance matters

Internal clearance between inner and outer races is critical. For example, a bearing that is a press-fit on a shaft will see some expansion of the inner race. If it is then pressed into a crankcase or has two crankcase halves clamped around it, the outer race is compressed. Either or both of these actions will close up the clearance between the races, preloading the bearing, causing premature failure. Bearings marked C3 have the necessary internal clearance to allow for internal and external interference fits.

> **'Spec charts for bearing types and sizes are lengthy'**

Reading the numbers

Spec charts for bearing types and sizes are lengthy and confusing. For sake of example, let's take a typical bike wheel ball bearing, a 6206-2RS C3: the first '6' denotes a single-row deep-groove ball bearing; the '2' means light duty; '06' represents an inner diameter of 30mm; while '2RS' means there is a rubber seal between the races on both sides keeping factory fitted grease in; and C3 denotes the clearance. Unless you have several days, we'll leave it there.

Buying replacements

Original equipment bearings will, obviously, be perfect. They're not always expensive either. Sometimes OE parts are, of course, or you'll be after something unusual. So get friendly with your local bearing factor. A bearing specialist will be able to match most originals and should (we hope) understand the specification necessary for your application.

Fitting replacements

Use bearing drifts to fit rolling-element bearings and races. A needle roller bearing should be supported in the middle to prevent it from collapsing. Popping a bearing in the freezer and gently heating a housing prior to replacement can help ease fitment. Occasionally, pegged bearings – such as some mains – are no longer available with the locating pins. In such cases, a drop of bearing fit will prevent the outer race from turning in the cases. It can also get you out of trouble where an interference fit is a little short on interference. Treat bearings to a little oil or assembly lube so they aren't starting dry. Use an appropriate grease on unsealed chassis bearings.

Thankfully, Hugo decided not to do this in Rollie Free-style plimsolls and Speedos

Bantam flies the coup

After two and a half years (and eight instalments) this BSA has been transformed from a bare chassis into an approximately functional bike. It's been a learning experience

Hugo Wilson
1951 BSA Bantam

Hugo's now a *former CB* editor, although his Matchless, Morini and Honda projects will continue to be updated here. But he hopes the Bantam will be adopted...

The Bantam flies (well, sort of). I'm hazarding a guess at 50mph, because the speedo is still broken – but on its latest 30-mile test ride it felt crisp. And the lights work too. Wonders never cease...

After a winter spent fixing the centrestand, plugging fuel tank leaks and fitting a new clutch cable, handlebar grips and finally the original exhaust, I had high hopes for springtime entertainment. But at first the little BSA didn't want to play.

The first test ride of a freshly-fettled bike is always an event full of trepidation, so when the Bantam broke down after 15 minutes it wasn't a total surprise. Fortunately, it had the grace to coast to a halt outside a pub. It's important to approach fault-finding in the correct frame of mind, so rather than faff around looking for a spark, I headed to the bar and enjoyed a pint. This was clearly the correct thing to do, as once the bike had cooled off and I'd downed the beer it restarted easily. I took the short way home.

Hoping that it might fix itself, I left it alone for a month before trying again. Same deal, but sadly no convenient pub. It would start easily from cold, run for 15 minutes and then die. Coil? I left it another month and then investigated...

Slots under screws – easy timing (mal)adjustment

Electrics definitely aren't my strong suit, but I've adopted a new attitude – instead of fruitlessly trying to understand the tricky concepts of electro-magnetic fields, primary windings and alternating currents, I just ignore the theory but follow the instructions about what I'm supposed to check and how I'm supposed to check it. This approach gave me the naïve confidence to make the wiring loom for the Bantam.

Before checking the coil, I watched a couple of mildly confusing YouTube videos and read the technical information on the Electrex World website. I then tested the resistance on the coil's primary and secondary windings with my multimeter. In this case they're meant to be one ohm

PICTURES: CHIPPY WOOD, HUGO WILSON

Prescribed technique for extracting last drips of fuel

Hugo heartily recommends the Bantam as a project. Fancy it?

on the primary and around 4.5 ohms on the secondary. All seemed correct, but the test was done with the coil cold, so it wasn't conclusive.

Electrex World, who'd supplied the alternator/CDI set-up that I'm using on the Bantam, agreed that the readings were right and suggested further tests of the alternator. These confirmed the coil as the chief suspect. Sadly, it was well outside its one-year warranty.

With a new coil fitted, normal service was resumed. 'Normal service' being slightly lumpy low-speed running, but with a revvy top end; under load, it pulls strongly and keeps accelerating in top gear on my local test hill. I think it'd comfortably pull taller gearing, maybe one more tooth on the front sprocket for increased speed and a more relaxed ride.

I adjusted the idle and air screws, which gave a marginal improvement to low-speed running. Then I started to play about with the ignition timing. This is easy to adjust on the early Bantams, with the ignition stator plate being fixed by three screws that are accessible on the side of the engine. Try it one way, test it, then try it the other and test it again. Then put it back to what it was in the first place. It seemed that advancing the ignition slightly seemed to make it a bit smoother.

In truth, I think that the low-speed lumpiness is down to a mismatch between the original exhaust with teardrop silencer that was intended for a 3.5bhp 125, and the later 175 engine fitted to the bike. Given that it goes very nicely at the top end – and the exhaust looks great – I think that's a compromise worth living with.

Fired with enthusiasm, I extended my test ride. Obviously, at this point the bike stopped. I feared the worst after previous coil-related difficulties, but the problem appeared to be the fuel supply. You're already ahead of me – it'd run out of petrol.

Lying the bike on its side transferred the last dregs of petrol to the fuel-tap side of the tank, after which it agreed to be restarted and got me to within half a mile of the petrol station. Thankfully, the Bantam is very easy to push. Topped up with fresh fuel (and two-stroke oil) it chirped away happily once again.

> **'Fired with enthusiasm, I extended my test ride. At this point the bike stopped'**

So now the Bantam is in a typical magazine-project state – not quite finished. It needs paint and pinstripes, the speedo needs fixing, the original chainguard needs fitting, there is a slight fuel leak and a new battery might be a good idea. Raising the gearing would be good, too. But most of all it needs more use to iron out any other bugs. I'm not going to do that, though. It feels like we've saved the bike, so rather than have it clutter a lock-up, it's now time for someone else to do the finishing touches and to use it. Could that be you? If so, it's yours for £1650ono – send an email to letters@classicbike.co.uk if you are interested in buying it.

And even if you don't want this one, I can recommend a Bantam as a project; they're simple, with good parts supply, a lovely owners' club and they qualify you for entry to lots of fantastic events.

Useful contacts

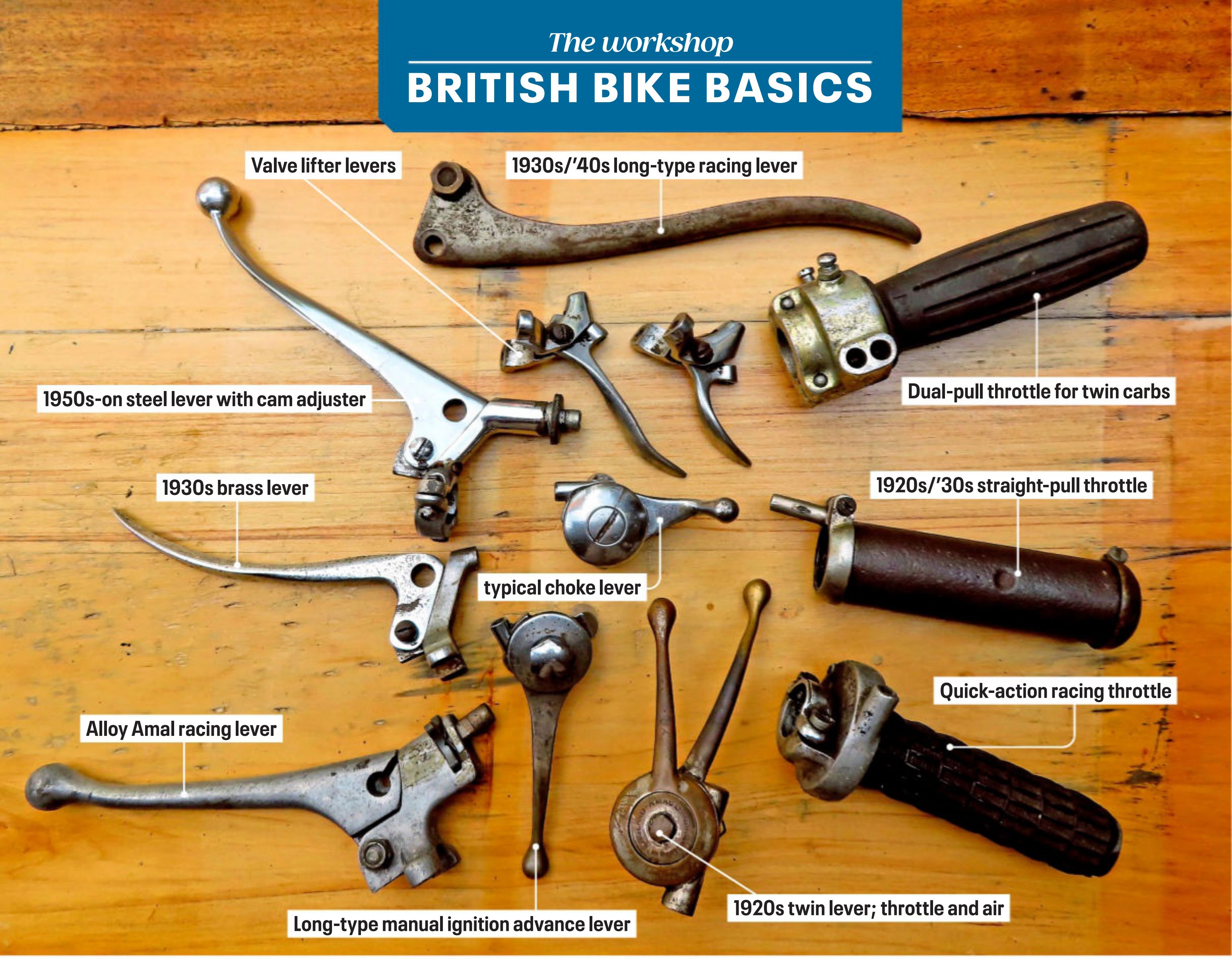
Electrex World: Alternator/CDI unit, electrexworld.co.uk

Vehicle Wiring Products: Everything needed for the rewire, vehiclewiringproducts.co.uk

Draganfly Motorcycles: BSA spares, draganfly.co.uk

Tank Care Products: Tank sealing kit, tankcareproducts.co.uk

Bantam Owners Club: Lovely people, active club with a fantastic specialists and services guide, bsabantamclub.com


Valve lifter levers
1930s/'40s long-type racing lever
Dual-pull throttle for twin carbs
1950s-on steel lever with cam adjuster
1930s brass lever
1920s/'30s straight-pull throttle
typical choke lever
Quick-action racing throttle
Alloy Amal racing lever
1920s twin lever; throttle and air
Long-type manual ignition advance lever

Levers & throttles

There aren't many switches on an old bike, but there's usually a lot of levers. Throttles are different, too. Here's how to get a handle on what they all do

Rick Parkington

When trains had levers to pull, kids wanted to be engine drivers - but not now they just have buttons to press. Playing a Casey Jones role to get your bike running just right with its levers is rewarding too.

When bikes only had an engine and belt drive, with no gearbox and no clutch, the handlebar controls were just throttle and front brake on the right; ignition advance and decompressor on the left. The decompressor was used for stopping the engine, but also (echoing the steam age) for softening its punch, acting as a clutch substitute for things like slow turns.

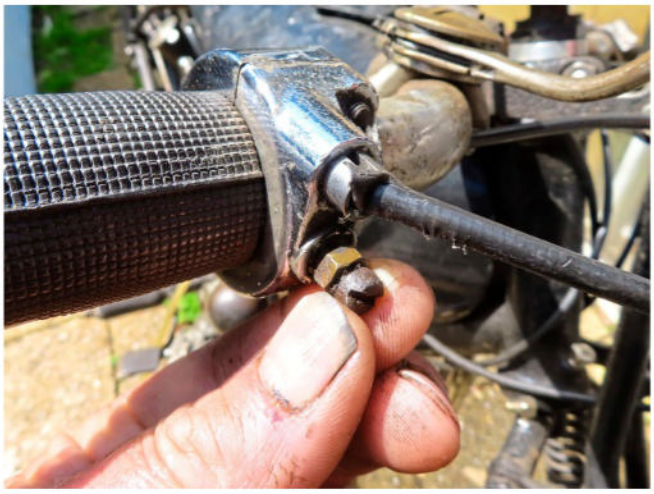
So when a 'free engine' (clutch) was invented, its lever went on the left bar. With the left hand operating the clutch, the arrival of the gearbox a little later meant the hand-change had to be on the right – and once that was established, it stayed there when the mechanism was adapted for foot operation. The US market was primarily behind the gearchange switching to the left in the late '60s, arguing for standardisation with car drivers accustomed to right-foot braking.

Compared to today's simple, often-labelled controls, a forest of levers can be bewildering, but the relaxed nature of older bikes means they don't need much attention on the move. You only touch the valve lifter for starting and maybe stopping the engine. Choke is rarely necessary.

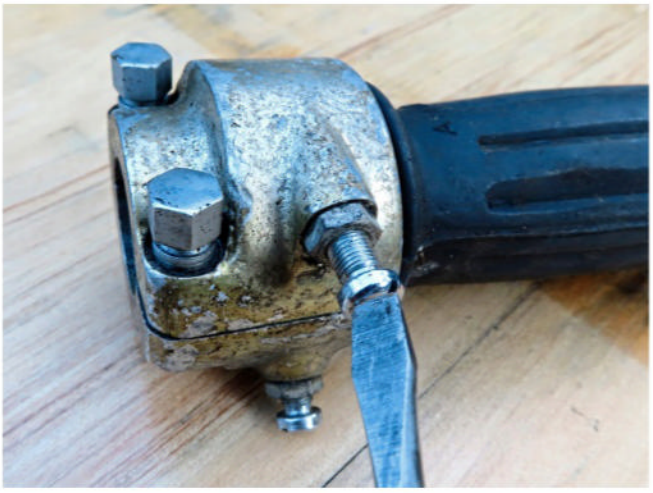
Even manual ignition usually only needs retarding for kickstarts – to prevent a starting kickback – but experimenting with the lever teaches you about your engine. Slight retard on a gradient or in slow traffic will take away any harshness and find a sweet spot – you can be your own 'advance curve'. You can even pull the lever to full retard for a moment to see what slipped timing feels like; the flattened exhaust note also echoes how an engine sounds just before seizure, so it's worth recognising. Retarding a magneto slightly weakens the spark, so if the bike misfires or cuts out on retard when hot, you know the magneto may be faulty.

The levers on British bikes all look the same compared to later bikes, but in fact there are many varieties to suit different requirements. So here's a few options with some tricks that will give you the leverage to get things working sweetly.

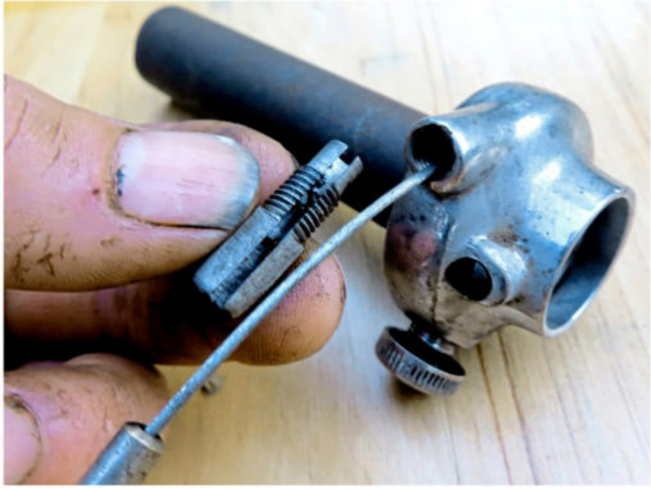
- **Next Month:** Forks of the girder and telescopic varieties



1 Aid to indication
Tightening this screw prevents the throttle snapping shut – it's useful for hand signals. If you wind the locknut against the screw head, it's easy to grip and adjust while riding.

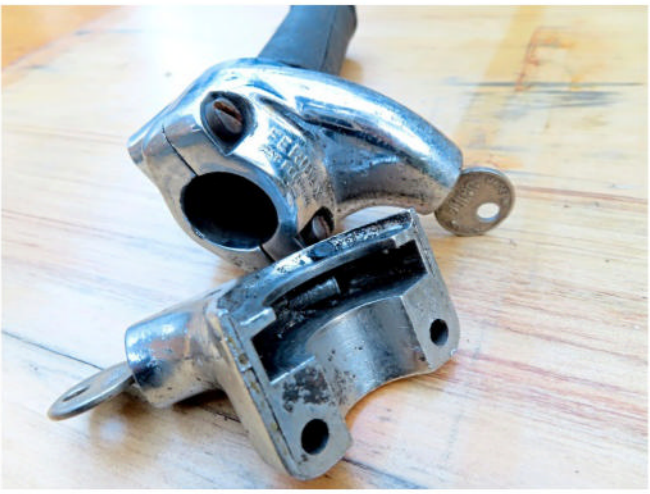


2 Anti-cable-stretching device
Racing or 'quick action' throttles sometimes have another screw. Set to stop the twistgrip barrel at full throttle, it prevents overloading the cable when it's being stretched to get a few more mph…



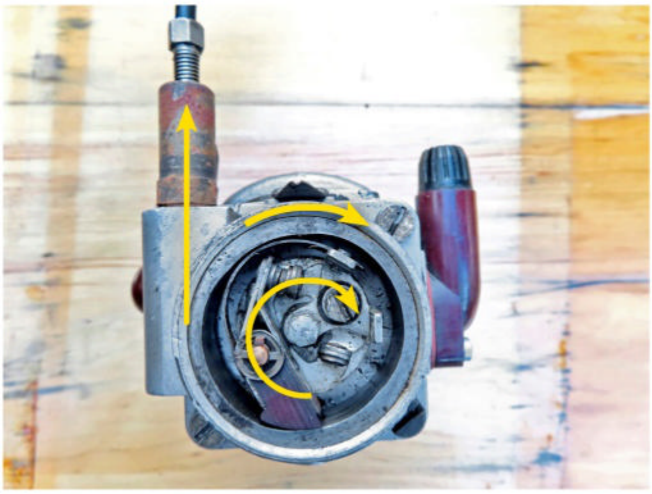
3 Triumph's friction screw
Triumph's throttle only fits their one inch (reduced to $^{15}/_{16}$in) bars. It has an easy grip friction screw and to change the cable, you just remove the stop and roll the drum forward to unhook the nipple.

4 Left-hand dipper
Feridax 'twist-dip' was a period accessory in $^{7}/_{8}$in or one inch. It's tidy and saves fumbling for the dipswitch, but not everyone can get on with the left grip being able to move like the throttle.



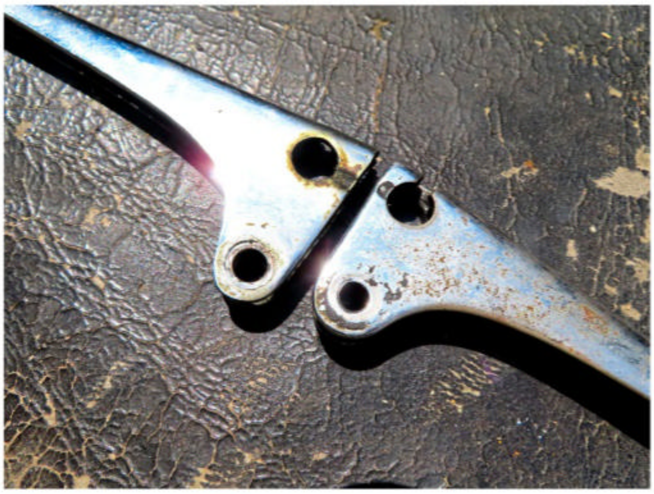
5 Theft deterrent
The VMCC's Titch Allen invented the 'Feridax locking twistgrip' as an aid to thief-proofing. The key is often missing, but they're usually FA series with the key number scratched inside.

6 Valve lifter in action
To start singles, turn the kickstart up to compression, pull the valve lifter trigger, turn again – only about five minutes of a clock face – then release the lever, lift your foot and take a full swing.



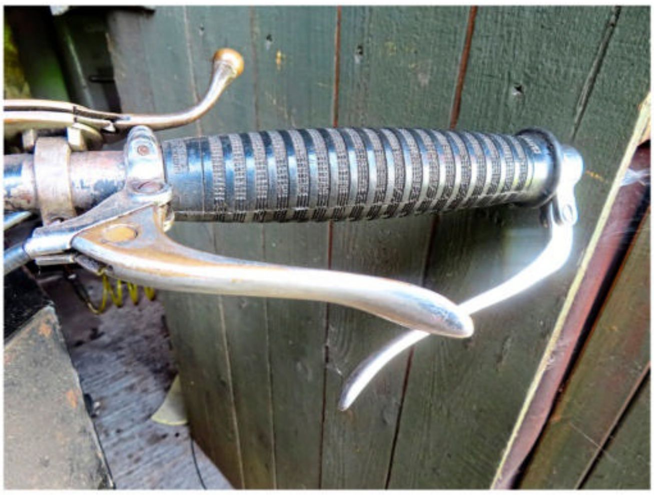
7 Rotating and retarding

Which way retards ignition for starting? The points shown above go clockwise. Left cable entry pulls the cam ring clockwise, too; retard is when the ring moves the same way as the points.



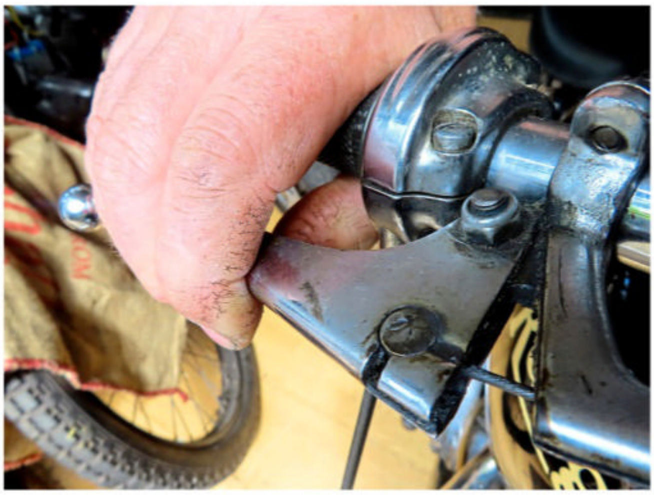
8 Clutch lever lightening

A short pivot-radius clutch lever, with 15mm between nipple and bolt (right) makes the clutch feel much lighter but will slightly reduce the lift, so ensure there's enough to free the clutch properly.



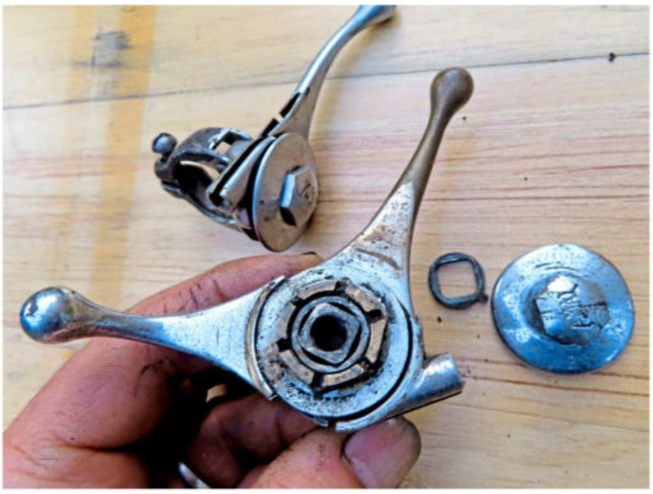
9 Inverted levers

Similarly, vintage left-inverted levers are for valve lift. There's a separate clutch lever; you can use the inverted lever for the clutch, but again they offer less cable travel so you may suffer clutch drag.



10 Get your grip right

Drum brakes take a firmer hand than discs to work well. It's worth adjusting the cable so there's enough free play to get your fingers – not just the tips – around the lever for decent grip.

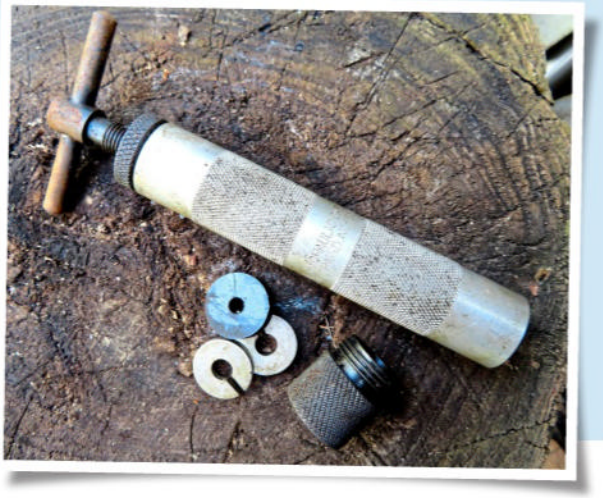


11 One lever or two?

On a single lever, friction is set to move freely but stay in position by tightening the centre bolt. But twin levers have separate adjustment for the top lever, using this internal nut and lock washer.

In the toolbox

Cable oiling is recommended. You can buy adapters for aerosols but these hydraulic ones, while more fiddly, generally make a better job of forcing the oil right through the full length.



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74 H2C 750 Purple	£16995
74 S1C 250 Blue	£7K approx.
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HONDA

76 CB750K5 Red	£8995

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78 XS750 Red	£3K approx
99 YZF-R1 1000 9K miles	£5295

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76 GT750A Blue	£9995 ono
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BSA

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NSU

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AJS MODEL 14
1964, 24000 miles, Owned by me since 2014, not running at present and withoout battery, was running about 5 years ago, layed up and never tried starting, needs new battery and not sure the old one was correct, ovno.£1500 South Lanarkshire, tel:07747510091

ARIEL 350
1943, OHV, in very nice condition with correct levers, prop stand, light switch and original panniers. £7250 Middlesex, tel:07798866071

ARIEL 350
1959, 3460 miles, A very easy starter and a mellow bike to ride, in excellent condition, ready to show. £2995 Essex, tel:07395057343

BMW K100
1988, 66500 miles, Luggage, spares, garaged, fair condition, 12 months MoT, ONO. £750 Cambridgeshire, tel:07512000210

BMW R45
1982, 23700 miles, Rare, matching numbers bike with full DVLA HPI summary. Meticulously maintained by BMW Motorrad. Period screen. Twin discs. Powder coated wheels. Keihan stainless exhaust. New clutch &amp; Ikon shocks. £5500 Sheffield, tel:07976254252

BMW RS
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BSA 250 SINGLE
1971, C15 engine in a BSA Starfire frame, stainless steel rims, mudguards, new exhaust, rear shocks, electronic ignition and remote oil filter, carb rebuild and Dyno readout. £2100 Hampshire, tel:07301576656

BSA A10
1959, Red/Black with chrome mudguards, twin clocks, rack, T/L/S, front brake, Avons, photos available, V5C, from my private collection, free delivery. £6950 Yorkshire, tel:01723372219

BSA A10
1959, Black/Silver chrome, on SORN, owned last 11 years, 6 former keepers, little use now but started and run on a weekly basis, 12 volt NBG earth, T140 front brake and more, lovely bike. £4000 North Yorkshire, tel:01765641228

BSA A65
1967, In need of restoration, been stored for decades, 99% complete and not dismantled, 2 owners from new, old and new log books. £3250 Uk, tel:01242861164

BSA A7
1957, Metallic Green with contrast Dark Green frame, Ariel style brakes, Avons, probably one of the very best available, offered from private collection, free delivery arranged.£5950 Yorkshire, tel:01723372219

BSA B31
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BSA B33
1955, 43600 miles, 500cc single, Maroon, good condition, very reliable, owned 19 years, later fuel tank. £2450 West Dorset , tel:07970220906

BSA B40
1967, 12500 miles, Ex war office, immaculate well sorted bike, fully restored to very good standard in 2023, ready to use, runs really well, ill health forces sale. £2295 Lancs, tel:07908623649

BSA BANTAM
1969, 11000 miles, Refurbished, 3 previous owners, original registration document and V5 in my name, lots of new parts, runs, matching numbers, some things still to be done, please ask for video and pictures. £2400 Evesham, tel:07503038787

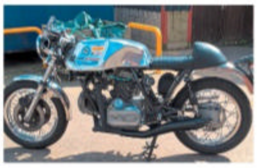
BSA BANTAM
1966, Rebuilt 5 years ago, used regularly, good starter, electronic ignition, ready to ride, ONO. £2250 York, tel:07496935056

BSA C15
1963, BSA C15 Trials, electric ignition, alloy wheels, good Michelin tyres, low geared, ready to ride. £3250 Bridlington, tel:07816561852

BSA FIREBIRD
1969, 12000 miles, Very clean and original, large history file, matching numbers, imported 2004, 4 owners since, regular servicing and MoT's, recent new carbs, electronic ignition, fitted with period indicators. £6000 London, tel:07986756359

BSA GOLDSTAR
1959, Clubman trim, 500cc, Flangeless alloys, new Avons, new GP carb, Koni shocks, twin clocks, Thorspark ignition, owned 6 years, offered from private collection, in showroom condition, free delivery. £9950 Yorkshire, tel:01723372219

DOUGLAS DRAGONFLY
1957, Restored by Douglas club member in Bristol, nice looking bike, current owner 9 years. £4000 Winchester , tel:07545969337



DUCATI 900
1979, 28000 miles, Owned by me for nearly 20 years, well looked after, ready for Summer fun, historic free tax, MoT exempt etc, reluctant sale due to bad knees etc, Ducati two into one exhaust, price ono. £7000 Northants, tel:07746699151

HONDA GOLDWING
1981, 31000 miles, Tax and MoT exempt, tip top condition, very good runner. £4800 Leiecster, tel:07855407421

MV AGUSTA 125
1960, 100000 miles, Fully restored a few years ago, new carb, exhaust etc, ready to go, rides perfectly.£3695 Warrington , tel:07769990917

SUZUKI GS750
1978, 68927 miles, Private seller, Red, manual, 5 speed, petrol, 750cc, original paint and silencers (more pictures on request), new tyres and brakes. Starts and runs well, very reluctant sale. £3500 Ramsgate, tel:07395649395

TRIUMPH TIGER CUB
1958, 1234 miles, 18"and 19" wheels. Superb standard condition with matching numbers, original registration and buff logbook. Very rare, unused since being rebuilt. New rims and tyres. £3995 Oxon, tel:07960447592

HONDA 350
1971, American import trail, valid V5/NOVA, all original except rear shocks, Boyer Bransden electronic ignition, frame powder coated, chrome and plastics in good condition, excellent example. ONO. £3200 North Yorkshire, tel:07788465300

HUSQVARNA CR
1985, New plastics and decals, powder coated frame, electronic ignition, stainless steel spokes, new tyres. Kent, tel: 07957 633668

MZ TROPHY
1972, 5200 miles, 1972 ES250/2 MZ Trophy. Excellent running order. Ridden regularly. Beige/Black. Original registration number. £3995 Wiltshire, tel:07554317605

SUZUKI GS750
1982, 8300 miles, Good condition, carbs cleaned and overhauled, runs very nicely, new carb/airbox, rubbers fitted, original exhaust - slight dent on the left hand one. £3750 Chippenham, tel:07552219787

TRIUMPH TIGER CUB
1963, 1234 miles, Lovely condition, Black and Silver. May swap for project. What have you got to offer?, £3250 Hook,Hants, tel:07501084121

HONDA 400
1988, 24000 miles, Good condition for year, good runner, please call for further details.£1900 Lowestoft , tel:07976119771

KAWASAKI GPZ 900
1984, 34700 miles, Fantastic condition, garaged always, original and correct exhausts, starter clutch replaced, one of the best examples you will find, many spares included, OEM front discs etc, please call. £5500 Dorset, tel:07961576727

ROYAL ENFIELD CONTINENTAL
1967, 4 speed Crusader sports engine, aluminium tank, tidy machine with a file of paperwork, not used in the last 2 years, good compression, will need recommissioning.£2250 Kent, tel:01843832899

SUZUKI GT 500
1977, 12500 miles, Recent nut and bolt restoration including re-build crank, new big end bearings and pins, new conrods, re-bored, power-coated frame, new tyres, runs well, genuine reason for sale.£5000 York, tel:07955572212

TRIUMPH TROPHY
1971, Oil in frame, resprayed frame, wheels refurbished, current owner 20 years.£3500 Winchester , tel:07545969337

HONDA 400/4
1978, 42449 miles, Priced to sell, it starts, it stops, very tidy and quite rare these days, MoT and tax exempt, owned and garaged for 29 years, owners manual and Haynes manual, some other bits and bobs available. £2200 Kent, tel:07596958547

LAMBRETTA SX
1966, 225 Rapido engine, SX number plate, less than 500 miles on rebuilt engine, can email more photos. £4500 Kent, tel:01843832899

ROYAL ENFIELD MODEL J
1952, Please call for more information. £3500 Netherlands, tel:0031630586394

SUZUKI T500
1972, 46000 miles, Cafe Racer style, totally rebuilt, original parts included, immaculate condition. £4600 Newcastle, tel:07961807273

TRIUMPH TRW
1956, In really nice fully restored condition, lovely postwar Military Triumph, rewired, resprayed, new tyres, rims, Solex carbs, new quality panniers. £4750 Uxbridge, tel:07798866071

HONDA CBX
1984, 1000 miles, 75% complete, additional running Honda CBX 750 F also advertised for sale on site. £225 Hampshire, tel:07904143377

MATCHLESS G12
1959, 66362 miles, Very original, good starter with new carb and electronic ignition, lots of Plumstead grunt. £2950 Basingstoke, tel:07815155243

SUZUKI GS1000E
1980, This is a very nice original example of a GS1000E, with original exhausts. The bike has just had extensive recommission 1,700 including a new clutch. It is smooth and quiet with a very powerful engine. It comes fully serviced with a three month warranty (T). £ 7250 Kent, tel: 01959 444441

TRIUMPH SPEED
1961, Immaculate Black and Cream paintwork, matching numbers, new Devon rims, recent tyres, new seat, controls etc, many receipts. Current V5C, stunning 500cc classic. Free delivery arranged. £5950 Yorkshire, tel:01723372219

VARIOUS MOPEDS
1957, 4500 miles, Made by Rabenieck, Germany, in stunning condition, starts and runs beautifully, quite a rare and sought after little bike, I'm reducing my collection due to health reasons. £2250 East Midlands, tel:07948757599

HONDA CBX
1984, 6000 miles, V5C, tax and MoT exempt. Good condition. Starts and runs, additional spares bike available. £1195 Hampshire, tel:07904143377

MOTO GUZZI ZIGOLO
1958, Rare, 98cc, frame, tank, wheels - in need of an engine and a good owner. £250 Brighton, tel:07977159302

SUZUKI GS650GZ KATANA
1982, This is probably the best 650 Katana you can find anywhere ! It is a UK bike has done less only 9,000 miles from new, and looks , rides and runs like a brand new bike. If you want a beautiful, useable and rare katana, you simply will not find better, It comes fully serviced with a three month warranty. (T) £7750 Kent, tel: 01959 444441

TRIUMPH T120
1971, 750 engine with Nourish crank and lightened valve springs, not matching numbers, last ran 2022. £6750 Milton Keynes, tel:07748112572

VELOCETTE VIPER
1959, Age related number but frame and engine numbers match, rebore, top overhaul, brakes, Magneto reconditioned, Stuart Towner, alloy wheels, 1745 miles since restoration, electrics need uprating.£3900 Uk, tel:02083370368

YAMAHA 250
1978, 21620 miles, Please call. £2700 Netherlands, tel:0031630586394

YAMAHA V-MAX
1985, 23000 miles, MoT March 2026, full power Canadian import, Supertrapp exhausts, V5C in my name, just had oil and filter etc, will become historic, MoT and tax exempt next year, may take P/X. £3250 Norfolk, tel:07969510071

YAMAHA XS 650
1979, Please call for more information. £1900 Netherlands, tel:0031630586394

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Leather sheepskin Brown flying jacket, very heavy large to ex large as new, £450, quick sale, buy for winter cost over £1200 to buy same as Irvin.
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East London

VOLKSWAGEN CAMPER
Volkswagen 1981 camper air cooled MoT/tax exempt, history, good runner, exchange old vee twin combo on road. Tel: 07863262603 London

SIDE LIGHT
Old sidelight good for motorbike or other things £20 postage free.
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East London

HARLEY DAVIDSON SIDECAR BODY
Harley Davidson sidecar body 1936 upwards for big twin seats screen leaf springs spare wheel carrier mudguard sidecar cover no chassis £3500, firm original exchange outfit.
Tel: 07863262603
London.

BSA M20 ARMY MOTORBIKE FRAME
1940s came with Harley 45 military forks, front stand tool box, last owner was going to build a bobber, custom bike has sidecar lugs on left £1900 or £500 for Harley parts has V5 log book in my name build your own combo. Tel 0208 5341761 East London

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VARIOUS
Ducati 1980 GTS 900cc seat £225 headlight brackets chrome. £125 Harley Davidson sidecar body 1928 upwards original seats cover exchange outfit on road. No chassis. Tel: 07863262603 London

BSA A50 PROJECT
1962 engine and wheels rebuilt, all good quality, original and 90% there. No V5. £1,000.
Tel: 0774891069 UK

HARLEY DAVIDSON SIDECAR
1936 upwards for big twin seats, screen, leaf springs, spare wheel, carrier mudguard, sidecar cover, no chassis. £3500 firm original exchange outfit.
Tel: 07863262603
London

PAIR OF SHOCKS
Classic British pair of shocks, new old stock, might fit pre unit Triumph £95 firm, plus post or free pickup in London. Tel: 07863262603 London

BSA MOTORBIKE FRAME
BSA M20 army motorbike frame, 1940s, came with Harley 45 military forks front stand tool box, last owner was going to build a bobber custom bike, has sidecar lugs on left £1900 or £500 for Harley parts, has V5 log book in my name, build your own combo. Tel: 0208 5341761 East London

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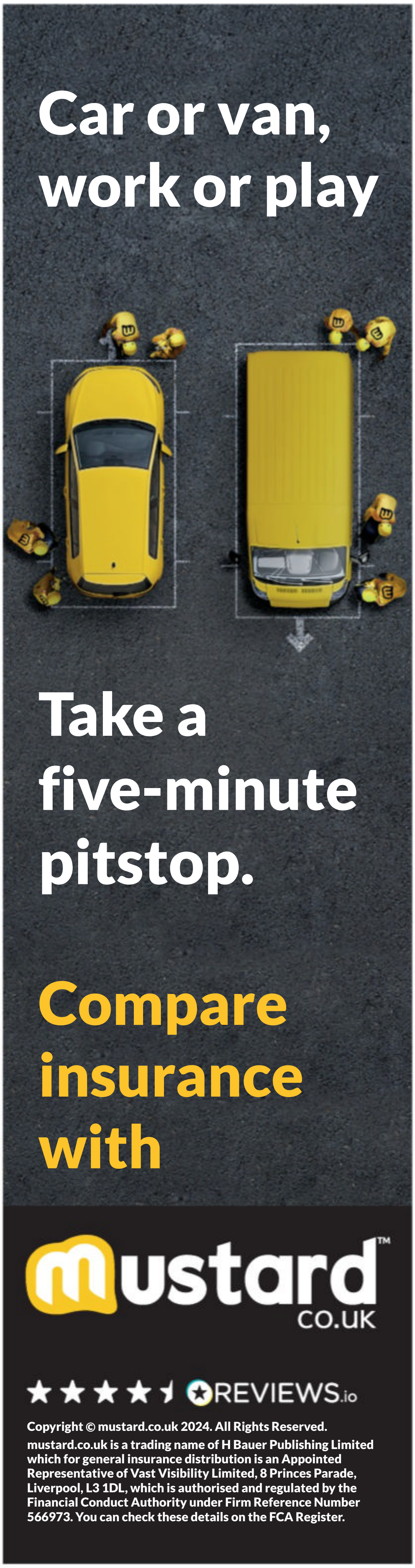

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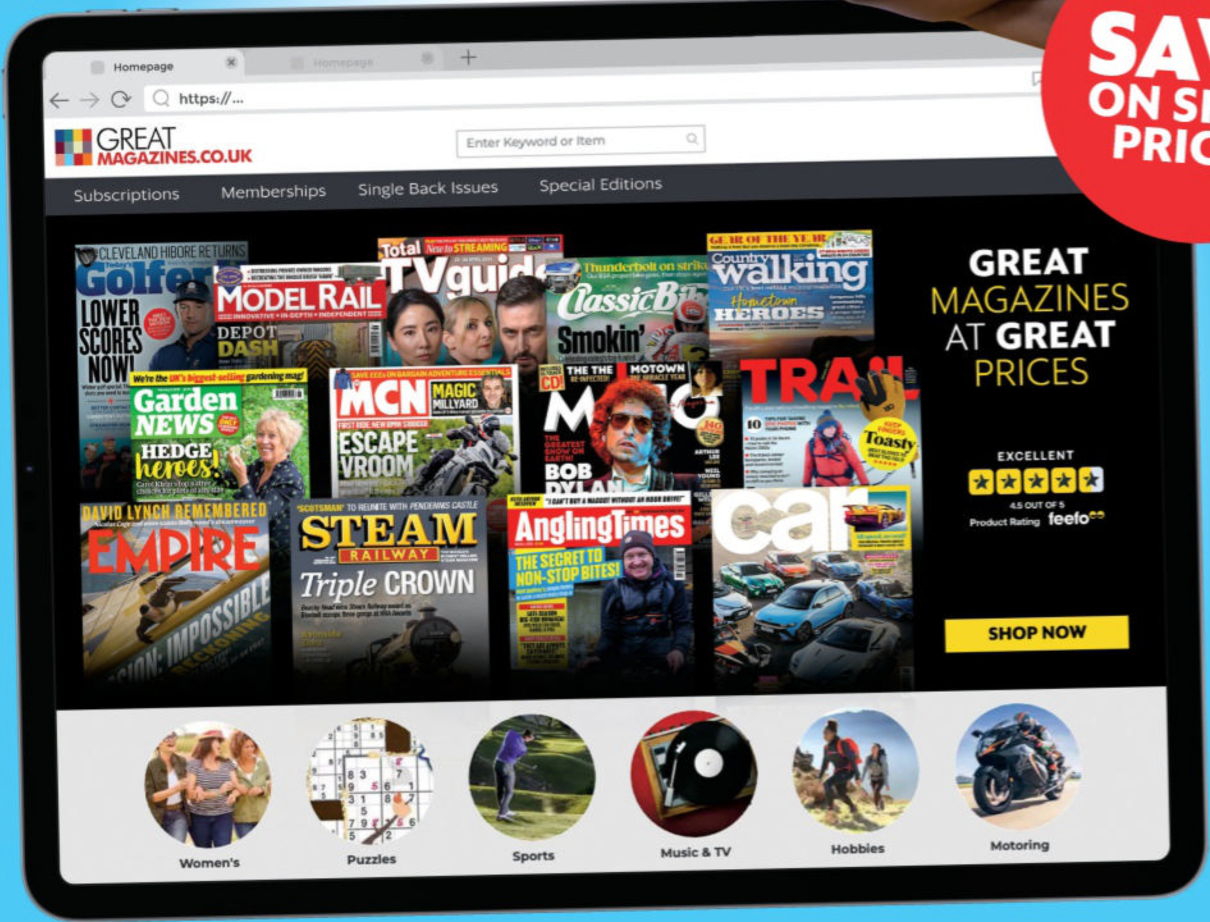
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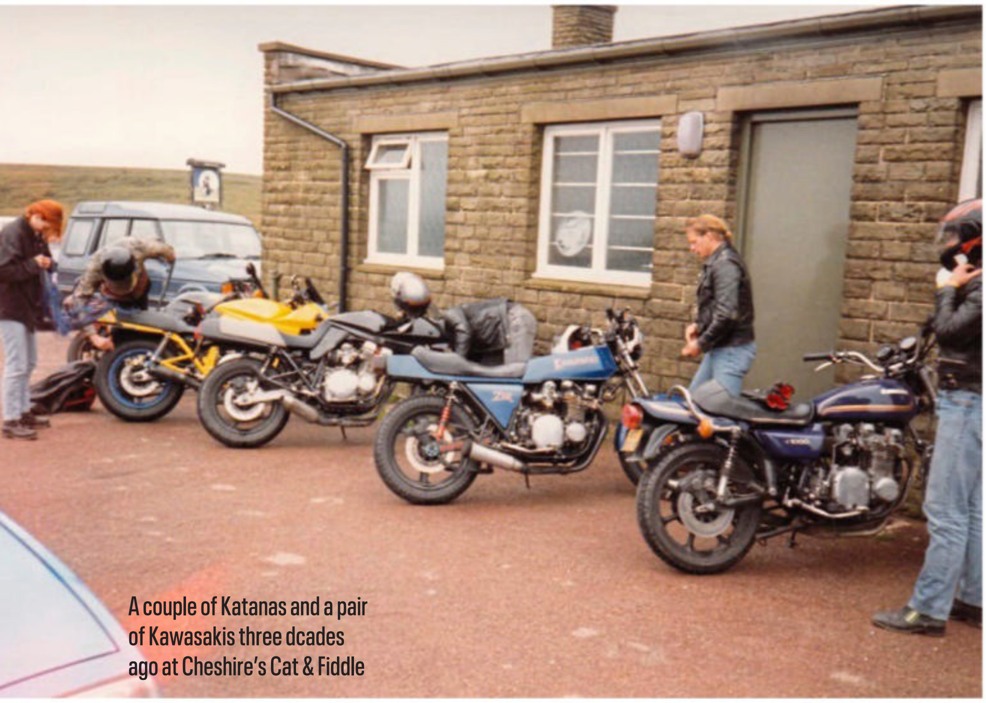
Kats at the Cat


CHRIS HARRISON

A couple of Katanas and a pair of Kawasakis three dcades ago at Cheshire's Cat & Fiddle

This was taken outside the Cat & Fiddle pub in the early '90s. That's my black Katana, which I'd bought from Twiggers in Loughborough for £1600. A chap called Blounty had made the exhaust – it was the loudest thing in the world. He'd also misspelt 'engineering' on the engine covers, which took ages to polish out.

Jez and Michelle are at the back with his banana Katana (it was the reason I bought my bike). The blue Z1-R was Tony's and the Z1000 belonged to Stuart (I now have that bike, the black Katana and another Z1000, plus a Z900 A4 that I bought in 1986).

We'd do five or six big meets and rallies a year, which took a bit of planning around work. I've still got a box full of all the badges and loads of T-shirts.

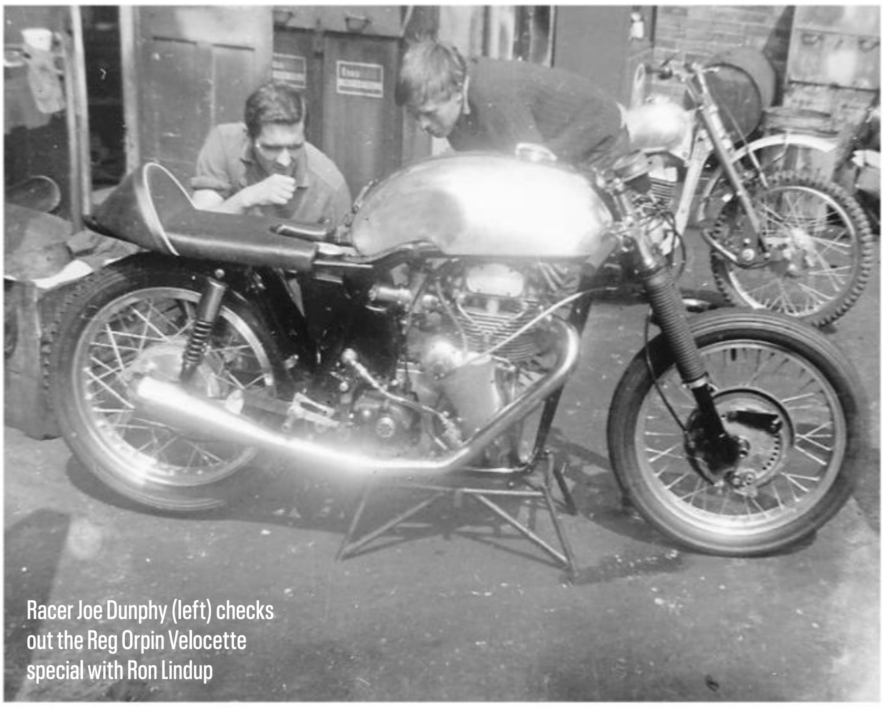
Chris Harrison

Extra injection of Venom

Whilst I worked at L Stevens in Shepherd's Bush in the '60s, Reg Orpin decided to build a race bike based on a Velocette Venom engine. He had the head recast to alter the valve and carb angle – which I think John Tickle was involved with – and fitted a big-bore GP carb. The origin of the frame is not known, but the alloy fuel tank, oil tank and front brake came from John Hartle. I spent hours polishing the fuel tank, being the junior of the outfit.

This was the first Reg Orpin Velo special, and Joe Dunphy was the first to come and try it out for size (seen in the picture with Ron Lindup).

We also took delivery of a Norton Manx; we put a 50-yard roll of cardboard across Goldhawk Road for me to push it to the shop, to avoid the tyres picking up debris. We sent the engine to Geoff Monty to increase the power from 47bhp to a huge 54bhp. Two lads from Ireland came to race this, and after a few meetings they went back to Ireland with the van and Manx, never to be seen again! In addition, we had a Greeves Silverstone which was raced by Gordon Keith and A Harris.


DEREK BYE

Racer Joe Dunphy (left) checks out the Reg Orpin Velocette special with Ron Lindup

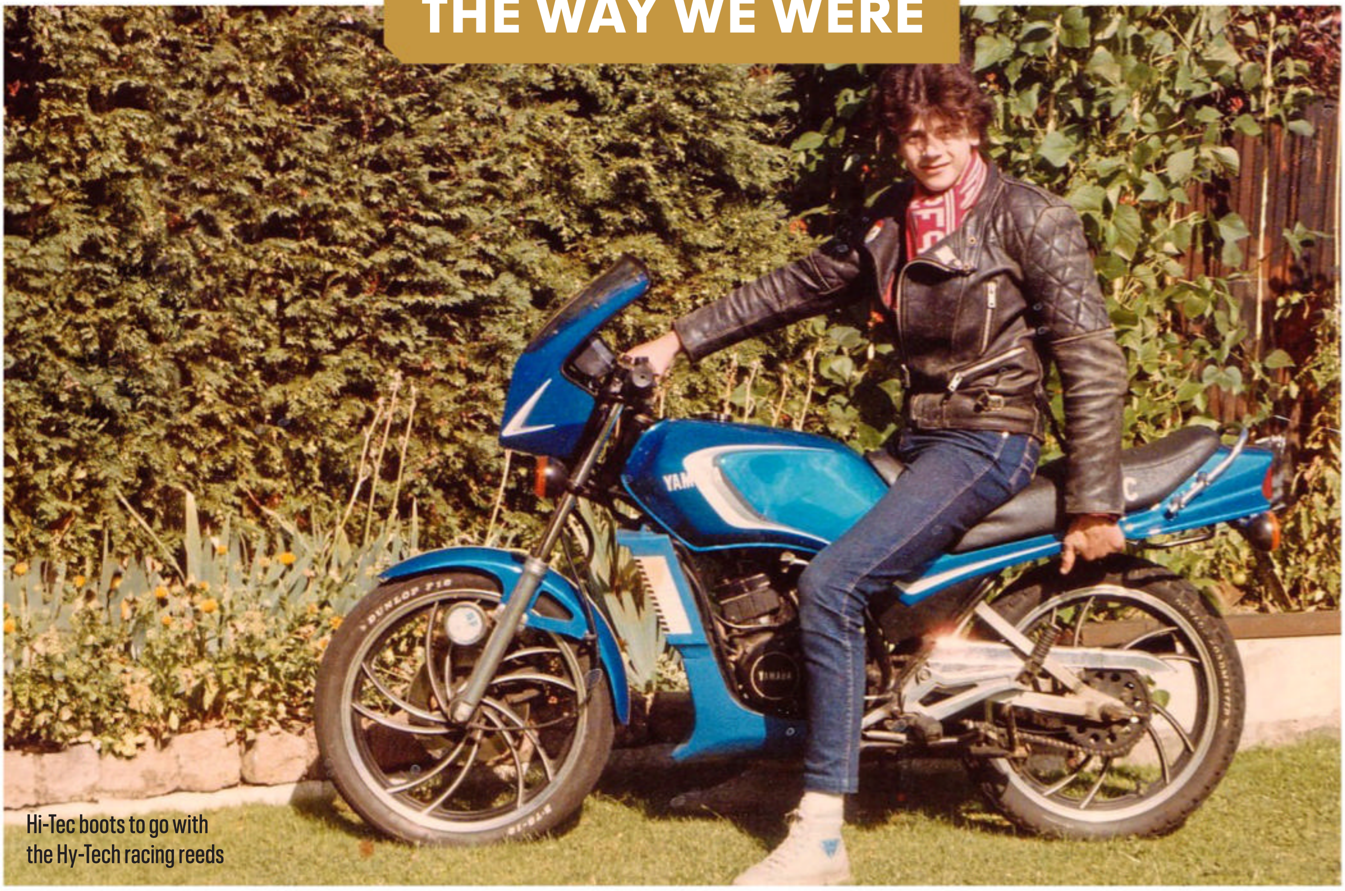
It was a grim place to work, with the dustbins, mice and outside loo, but worth it for the great time and riding all the bikes on the forecourt.

Derek Bye

SHOW US YOUR PHOTOS

Got a photo from back in the day of you showing off your bike? Tell us the story behind it... who you are with, when and where it was taken, and – most importantly – what are your memories of the bike(s) pictured? Share it with CB readers by sending a decent-quality scanned image by email to the address: **classic.bike@bauermedia.co.uk**

ANDY GURSKI



Hi-Tec boots to go with the Hy-Tech racing reeds

Fastest in the village

The glorious 1980s – a time of expansion chambers, local rivalry and white high-tops

This is me on my Yamaha RD125LC. It was about a year old, on a Y-plate, and I bought it from Kirks in Shepshed. He took my AR50 in part exchange and had a buyer lined up, so we did the deal before I was old enough to ride the RD. It sat in my garage for a week before my 17th birthday in February 1984.

I was on day release to Loughborough Tech (welding craft practice) on the day of my birthday, but I didn't go in – there was snow on the ground, but I just had to ride the RD. I got through two full tanks of fuel going everywhere and anywhere. I was a shivering wreck and loved every minute of it. It was my first experience of a proper two-stroke powerband – and after a moped, it was like being smacked in the face with a shovel. 'Whoa, what just happened!?'

Everyone in those days got a 50cc bike when they turned 16, and a 125 when they turned 17. There was a lot of rivalry. A mate – Glyn Newton – had an RD125DX and he was on about how his brother had ported it and it was going to be faster than my LC. I passed him while he was flat-out down Tickow Lane and changed up two more gears in front of him. Steve Wooldridge, who I worked with at the coach works, had bought my brother's 250LC – he'd take me to work on the back one week, and I'd take him on the back of my 125 the next week, as you could carry someone if they had a full licence while on L-plates. We clocked a lad called Vanny on his Kawasaki AR125, so went for it – and passed him two-up.

I fitted a K&N filter, Hy-Tech reeds and a bigger main jet, along with an Allspeed pipe and flat Micron bars – because we all thought we knew what we were doing and had to make our bikes faster. It was all about who had the quickest bike, and mine was the fastest 125 in Shepshed. A mate in his Ford Cortina clocked me at 96mph down Hathern Hill.

There were three of us doing YTS – me, Paul De Hayes and a lad called Sam – and we all had blue RDs. I can't remember the full registrations, but can remember the main letters: FUT, YUT and FRY. We went everywhere on them, including the British Grand Prix at Silverstone. There were loads of people in the campsite holding their big bikes with Alpha four-into-ones against the rev limiter; our 125s sounded like flies buzzing about. I kept it for about 18 months, did my test on it, then sold it to buy an RD350 YPVS. They were such great times.

Andy Gurski

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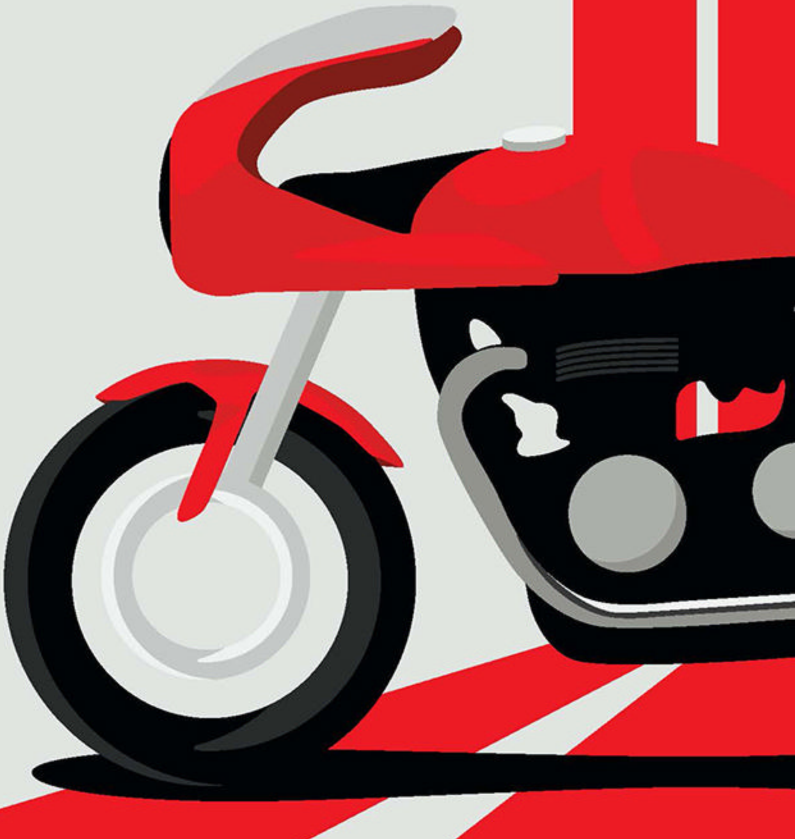

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